Pulpit Preaching

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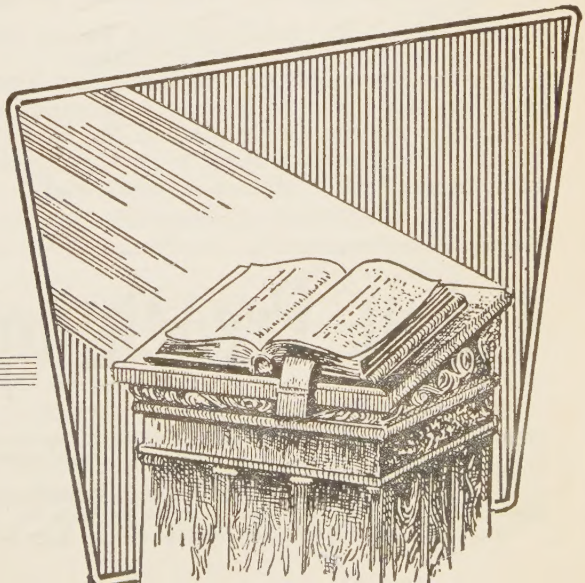

A PROFESSIONAL JOURNAL
FOR MINISTERS

Editorial Comments

This month's theme is "The Breadth of a Christian's Concern" and includes sermons relating to a Christian's responsibilities toward his church and his fellows.

The February topics will be "Season of Renewal," sermons for Lent, and "The Easter Confidence."

This month's guest editor is Dr. Fred E. Luchs, pastor of the First Congregational Church of Evanston, Illinois. We should welcome readers' replies to the thoughtful suggestions in his article, "Can Men over Fifty Write Good Sermons?"

E. Paul Hovey, pastor of the Congregational-Presbyterian (Federated) Church of Lewiston, Idaho, has been invited to edit our "Worth Quoting" column. This column is being expanded in response to many readers' requests for more "quotable quotes" and illustrations.

—o—

Books For Pulpit Preaching

Famous Stories of Inspiring Hymns, Ernest K. Emurian (W. A. Wilde Co., 185 pp., $2.50)
Hymns and the Faith, Erik Routley (Seabury Press, 311 pp., $5.75)
Christian Hymns, Kenneth L. Parry (The Macmillan Co., 124 pp., $2.)
Growing a Christian Personality, R. Lofton Hudson (Broadman Press, 121 pp., $1.50)
The Growing Edge, Howard Thurman (Harper & Brothers, 181 pp., $3.)
His Kingdom Is Forever, Ernest Lee Stoffel (John Knox Press, 182 pp., $3.)
Candles on the Glacier, Kenneth Joseph Foreman (Association Press, 184 pp., $3.)
The Morning Altar, Harold Lindsell (Fleming H. Revell Co., 255 pp., $2.)
Our Christian Symbols, Friedrich Rest (Christian Education Press, 86 pp., $3.50)
The Bedside Treasury of Inpsiration, ed. by Helen & Horace Johnson (Prentice-Hall, 368 pp., $4.95)
The Wisdom of the Living Religions, Joseph Gaer (Dodd, Mead & Co., 338 pp., $3.95)

Three new books on the Christian hymn heritage add greatly to our understanding and appreciation of lyrical faith. *Famous Stories of Inspiring Hymns* is a collection of true and vivid stories of the origins of

Continued on page 28

Can Men Over Fifty Write Good Sermons?

FRED E. LUCHS
Guest Editor

Do young ministers preach the best sermons? Or do men in the last decade of their usefulness reach the greatest homiletical heights? Was Dean Charles Gilkey at his best during World War I or II? Did Ernest Fremont Tittle preach his outstanding sermons in his neophyte years in Ohio or in his Evanston pulpit? Was it before or during his seminary presidency that Albert Palmer preached most effectively? Is your best sermon fore or aft?

Many may offer easy answers. Others will consult *Who's Who* to learn the period when our great preachers attained their most qualitative output. Some may reach into the barrel and bring forth works of ancient vintage to compare with next Sabbath's message.

All of us will be interested in a study made by Lehman and Heidler at Ohio University ["Chronological Age vs. Quality of Literary Output," *American Journal of Psychology,* LXII (January 1949), 75-89]. With age-data procurred by making a composite study of well-known histories of English literature, they constructed age-curves to see at what age a man gave the world his best literary output. What do they tell us?

The best poetry was written in the 25-29 age period. The best odes were written during the same age span. The best satiric poems were written in the early thirties. At what age were the best pastoral poems written? These teachers found the late twenties to be the ages of highest quality of such literary accomplishment. What about the sonnets? These scholars discovered that the age of highest quality of literary output was also in the late twenties. When they turned to lyric poetry, they found that the literateurs doing did their best work at the same age, the late twenties.

What shall we expect then when we come

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Pulpit Preaching

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The Breadth of a Christian's Concern

Church Equal to This Hour

DONALD MACLEOD, Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, New Jersey

Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts.
Zechariah 4:6

ne Sunday morning in February 1942, m the Nazi storm troopers had already rrun the whole of Norway, in the city Trondheim a service was scheduled to be in the Lutheran Cathedral to celebrate appointment of Quisling as the new rul- f the country. The people, however, stay- way and the soldiers and traitors found church almost empty. At two o'clock that rnoon large crowds were seen streaming ards the cathedral as the people decided ather for their own service. Their hopes e rudely broken when the Nazi police ed off every entrance to the church and ed several thousand Norwegian worship- to stand silently in freezing temperatur- n the city square. Then a voice, away at back of the crowd, began to sing Luther's hymn, "A mighty fortress is our God." the others picked up the strain with enthusiasm and conviction that one wegian said, "It sounded prouder and htier than I'd ever heard it before."

his incident led the late Basil Matthews Boston University to say, "A thousand s hence, this brave stand by the people Norway will be still hailed as one of the t splendid hours in the age-long story he Christian Church."

ertainly this was one of the grand mo- nts of the life of the Christian Church. what about the Church as you and I see n America today, or in your own commu- ? Ask the man in the street about the rch? What is he likely to answer? He probably shrug his shoulders and with ir of sheer indifference inform you that Church is of no interest or concern to . Or, he may react with sharp antagon- and declare that the people within the rch are no better than those without. he may charge that the Church is ough, as far as he can see it, and what s now doing can be done just as easily fully by other agencies and organiza- s. And so we might go on. But, disturb- as these attitude and criticisms are, we must remember that they are merely partial points of view; indeed some of them arise from personal grievances and from individual bias and prejudice.

NEVER SO GOOD

It is much more important, therefore, to know what those within the Church are thinking and saying. There is. of course, the enthusiast who feels that as far as the things have never been so good. He points to Church in the United States is concerned, facts which he who runs may read: Church membership in America has reached an all-time high; new church building has mounted into billions of dollars; local churches are forced to hold two and three morning services; religion makes popular copy in newspapers and magazines; a prayer room is established in the rotunda of the nation's Capitol building. So far so good. And certainly the expansive feeling of this enthusiast is shared by all of us.

At the same time, however, sober minds within the Church are not entirely free from alarm and concern. Assuredly the statistics about the Church's progress are thrilling, yea almost electrifying, but there is another aspect of the matter that is much less encouraging, namely, the Church's influence in and upon the nation's life. This is the disheartening factor. For every gratifying achievement we publish concerning the Church, the social agencies report an enormous increase in crime, drink, immorality, religious difference and secularism, which is despoiling the vital foundations of the nation's life. Indeed I recently read in a Canadian Church paper that one of their denominations was spending five times more on liquor annually than its total giving to the church, three times more on tobacco, and what is equally disturbing, the women are spending three times more on cosmetics than the total for National and Foreign Missions. These facts are mentioned, not to belittle what the Church is doing, but to put matters in their proper

perspective and to ask: How can the Church do a good job better? Is the Church fitted not only to meet its critics from without, but to capture a bigger place in the nation's destiny? Now that the Church in America appears to be loaded with success, is anything else needed to make it equal to this hour? These urgent questions are facing you and me *within* the Church and the answers we give and the things we do about them will determine the impact of the Church upon our national life for days to come.

Our text is one of the greatest declarations to be found in the Old Testament. It goes back to the year 510 B.C., when a little group of Jews had come out of Babylonian exile and were trying to rebuild the House of God at Jerusalem. Some scoffed at them and prophesied failure; others rejoiced in the success of Zerubbabel, the governor, and his builders. The prophet, Zechariah, however, had a dream in which he saw the temple fully built, standing as a symbol of truth in the world and shining as a beacon in the darkness. Then a voice told him to bring this message to the governor: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." This is the deeper method the Church of God must use today in order to be equal to this hour.

Now what does this mean in terms of the Church's life as you and I see it?

BELIEF AND CREED

First of all, it means *the Church must emphasize belief more than merely accepting a creed.*

Thomas Carlyle said, "A man lives by believing something." This is true also of the Church; it lives by the believing hearts of its members. But this does not mean that we downgrade the value or significance of the creeds. We repeat the Apostle's Creed each Sunday and we regard it as an admirable statement of the Church's thinking about God and his redemptive purpose and plan. Yet Church members need more than just the acceptance of a creed; they've got to *act* upon it, and that is belief. Too many merely accept a creed and defend its last letter, and thereby they become sort of "ice box" Christians — well-preserved. but cold, passionless, and totally lacking in contagious influence. And these give the reputation of the Church no help because they limit and weaken its impact upon the world. They do not see, as Dr. Sockman suggests, that belief and conduct are inseparably related.

On the other hand, when you say, "I believe in God, the Father Almighty," and truly mean it, that is, you believe not merely the fact but in the Person behind it, then God's Spirit has an opportunity with you. It means more than merely believing that God exists, it means believing in him enough to trust him, and to commit you way to him. Then your belief determines, changes, and shapes your character. And, doubtless, this is one of the basic things that will fit the Church for this hour. Not bursting statistics, not material might or earthly power, but spiritual essence and quality. Not merely a well-worded creed, but acted upon and believed in, in spite of consequences. And the presence in the Church of our time of countless earnest men and women whose beliefs have changed their character will mean a modern Church alive unto God, for which no one need to apologize. It will be, as the ancient writer put it, "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."

POWER AND SECURITY

Second, it means that *the Church must desire power rather than security.*

During those harrowing days when the gallant Scottish Convenanters were scattered over moor and glen for their faith, someone declared, "Where is the Church of God in Scotland today? I will tell you where the Church is. It is wherever a young man or woman is praying at the dykeside in Scotland: that's where the church is." And you might add also that that is the source of the Church's power.

The Church today must clarify the difference between power and security. Far too many churches, especially in our great cities, are more concerned about security. They like to feel safe. If the future of a downtown location seems critical and precarious, the congregation joins the mad rush to the suburbs. Most churches like to have their people living all around them. They don't like to be an outpost in a poor neighborhood or be forced to hold a site that was strategic fifty years ago. And this desire for security has closed and killed and rendered useless more Churches than one can count.

But to meet the challenge of today, the church's concern must not be security, but power. On every hand, people ask: Why hasn't the Church something to say about public affairs? Why is not its influence felt more strongly upon the evils of society? Why is not the strength of the Church more impressive and convincing? Simply because too many churches have become ramparts of security and have members and adherents

p are satisfied with a formal religion. In-
d most of the failures of the church
e stemmed from the absence of what
nner called, "the virile spirit-filled fel-
ship of the New Testament." Remember
at Jesus said to the early disciples, "Ye
ll receive power." But they had to wait
l watch and pray for it. Someone has
d, "A prayerless Church is a powerless
urch." Some years ago, Dr. John R. Mott
de inquiries to find out why some evange-
ic missions were so eminently effective
l successful, and in each case it was traced
the measure and depth of the prayers be-
d it. And he described such prayer as
e ultimate power that can move the
rld."

MISSIONS AND PLANS

Third, it means that *the Church must be
cerned about its mission rather than its
ms.* "Not by might, nor by power, but by
Spirit," saith the Lord of Hosts. Well
ght we paraphrase it in relation to the
urch and say, "Not by plans nor by pro-
ms. but by my Spirit," says Jesus of
zareth. These are days of planning. In-
d no part of the Church's work is done
thout a vast complexity of plans, pro-
ms, executives, and discussion, to such
legree that often its mission is lost in the
rly-burly of activity. Compare this with
what John Calvin said as he went to found the church in Geneva: "This Church is to become an instrument of freedom in the civic life of the city." What singleness of purpose! Of mission! Indeed a Church which has ceased to have a mission has ceased to be a Church at all.

In Hardiman Scott's novel, *The Lonely River,* Christopher Matthews, the rector, surprised and disturbed his wealthy and complacent congregation by stripping the sanctuary of all its decorations, ornaments and bric a brac. "It has come to me in my prayers," he said, "that we have obscured God's purposes in our services and that we needed to get to terms with ourselves again, to try to rediscover the purposes of God."

The Church of God, everywhere in the world, has been entrusted with a mission Hear it declared from the pages of the New Testament: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel." "As the Father hath sent me even so send I you." "Ye are my witnesses." "Hold fast what thou hast, let no man take thy crown." Our mission is nothing less than to establish God's world, and only by belief and prayer and a deep sense of mission will we be able to do it. As Dr. Mackey of Princeton has put it, "What we need within the Christian Church, if the Church is to match this hour, is Christians who are utterly Christian."

ne Testing of Loyalty

PHILLIPS PACKER ELLIOTT, First Presbyterian Church, Brooklyn, New York

Peter saith unto Him, even if I must die with Thee, yet will I not deny Thee.
Matthew 26:35

As we enter upon these Lenten weeks we
e aware of a double narrative in the Gos-
s. Primarily, there is the story of the
ster and His suffering and triumph. Run-
g along as a secondary narrative there
the story of the disciples and what took
ce in their lives. This second narrative
aches its culmination in the denial of Pet-
Jesus had predicted that the disciples
uld flee and at this Peter felt quite ag-
eved. He insisted that no matter what
ppened he would not go away. Jesus pre-
ted that before dawn came, before the
k crowed twice, Peter would deny Him.
e know how poignantly and pathetically
s propecy came true.

This brings before us the whole question
our Christian loyalty. Gathered around
e Lord's table, as the disciples were on
e night in which Jesus was betrayed, the
me issue is before us as was before them.
hen we leave the table and go out into the world, will we be with Him, or against Him? We are to think of how our loyalty, like Peter's, is tested.

TEST OF EXPERIENCE

We know that loyalty can not be tested theoretically but must be tested in experience. Our generation is making the mistake of thinking that loyalty can be ascertained by questionnaires and examinations. Peter would easily have been cleared that way. Any board, any committee, asking the question, "Will you be loyal to the Master?" would have been completely satisfied by his answer, "Even if I must die with Him, yet will I not deny Him." He would have been passed as a 100 per cent, unqualifiably loyal disciple.

The real test would come later, and this Jesus knew. He could foresee that the inner resources of Peter were not adequate for the pressures that would come upon him. The test was coming and Peter would fail.

The "rock" which his name signified would turn to sand. One of the memorable pictures by Rembrandt in the Rijks Museum in Amsterdam is of the scene in the court-yard with the face of the little servant girl close to Peter's as she taunts him at having been one of those with the Galilean, and he, his bearded features troubled and angry, is denying that he ever knew the man. So his loyalty was tested and so he failed.

TEST OF RESPONSE

How is our loyalty to Christ tested today? In the first place, it is tested at the point of our independence in answering His call. This is not so much a matter of cowardice as it is of acceptance of the standards of the group in which we live. Peter simply dropped back into the ordinary. He could not endure anything higher than that which was accepted by those around him. The foe of real Christianity is not so much paganism as it is mediocrity. We have no right to be content with less than the highest if we have professed His name.

It may not seem like disloyalty, this acceptance of the good instead of the best but, in Christianity, disloyalty it is. For our faith is a high religion; its issues are in the area of things great, difficult, sacrificial. There is more to life than "he profits most who who serves best," or "be good and you will be happy." We are tested by how far we still have to go. If we are content with the position we have reached in life, to all intents and purposes we have denied the Master. The question is not simply, are you true to the good, but are you true to the best? Or are you lured back by ordinary standards to accept what seems "good enough" and thus when the figure of Christ is placed before you to embarrass you and draw you out to an independent conviction, do you deny that you ever knew the man?

TEST OF FRIENDSHIP

Moreover, our loyalty is tested at the point of our friendship. All friendships impose many strange and difficult testings upon life. We are easily trapped into disloyalty. We are apt to accept the estimate which others make of a person, even of someone we know quite well. Thus we come close to disloyalty frequently when we fail to stand up for our friends, and say to the critics, "Well, I hardly know him."

We are to put our knowledge against theirs. We say of a friend "I do know him." We say of Jesus, "I do know the man." Friendships break because they are undernourished. Indifference amounts to disloyalty. We justify the weakening of friendships in the city by saying that our crowded, noisy, busy life here makes such ties impossible. But friendship can stand anywhere; this is a tree which can grow in Brooklyn as in any city.

Our loyalty to Christ is tested wherever our friendship with him is in danger. "I have called you friends," He said. The question now is, what do we call Him? To admire Him is not enough. Often people have awakened too late to see what they have lost by way of a human friend, someone whom they have admired but have not held close to themselves by ties of constant understanding and fellowship. We are in danger of awakening too late to realize what we are losing of friendship with Christ. Think of how the years slip by and the association which could mean so much to us is barely realized or used. In the time that is left to us therefore let us do what we can to cultivate, enlarge and enrich this friendship. We claim to belong to Him, but frequently say "I really do not know the Man."

TEST OF ACTION

Finally, loyalty must meet the test of action. There is a book of loyalty in the Bible. It is the Acts of the Apostles. Peter's failure was not permanent. He came back. He repudiated his denial. He showed that life could be redeemed, that the evil deed can even turn the scale toward the good. It is recorded that "he went out and wept bitterly." From this kind of experience came "The Acts." If the record had ended with the Gospels, we would not have known whether the disciples proved to be loyal or not. Now we know. "They all fled away," the Gospels say. Now we know that they came back, that the last words were not flight, escape, deniel, but rather action, loyalty, victory. It was not too late for them to redeem themselves, and to reveal their loyalty by work in the Master's cause.

It is not too late for you and me. We have not done very well as Christians. By the tests of independence and of friendship we have failed to measure up. Each must ask what can I do now? I am not yet a completely dedicated person and it will be a long time before I am. But portions of me can be loyal, and these can be enlarged as life goes on. Carlyle said, "It does not take much of a man to be a Christian but it does take all of him there is. That is true but one does not begin a Christian life by being completely loyal,—that is too much for us to ac

nplish. But this word, this thought, this d can be made Christian and gradually t area will spread until some day, in God's g d time and with His help, our lives may presented as living sacrifices, wholly ac- table to God, as is our reasonable service. So we go with our Lord through the final eks of His life and sit with Him around the table on the night in which He was betrayed. As for the disciples, so for us there is the testing of loyalty. We pray that in our fellowship together here we may gather such strength that in the independence of our spirit, in the power of our friendship, in the quality of our actions, we may reveal the loyalty which here we profess.

n Making Other People Christians

THEODORE P. FERRIS, Trinity Church, Boston, Massachusetts

There are bound to be some people in a gregation like this who are glad to be ristians themselves, but who would never anything, either directly or indirectly, to ke anyone else a Christian. They are glad participate in the life of the Christian mmunity, but they are not interested in reading that life to the rest of the world. o things are largely responsible for this. st, a natural shyness; and second, a cul- ated broadmindedness.

NATURAL SHYNESS

The shyness, of course, is rooted in respect the privacy of the individual. There are tain things, according to our understand- of other people, their rights and their nity, that are a person's own private busi- ss, and with which we would not dream interfering, or upon which we would not nt to exert undue influence. The person man chooses to marry is his own business, d it is a wise parent who recognizes it d leaves the decision entirely in his hands. e career a man chooses to follow is his own rsonal, private decision, and it is a bold n who attempts to tamper with it. And so feel that the God a man chooses to wor- p, and the way in which he chooses to rship Him, is something that belongs pe- liarly to that inner area of his life which call the private sanctuary of the soul. In- that sacred area we dare not enter, even thout our shoes.

Up to a certain point this is good. I am iling to tell you quite frankly that this t of shyness is something that I appreci- personally because I share it by tempera- nt and by habit. Indeed, I should not be rprised if a case could be made for the fact at this silent reverence for the personal ghts of another's privacy comes from ristianity, in one way or another; that it ows out of Christianity and is one of the uits of Christianity's reverence for the tegrity and dignity of every individual. If had to choose between a shy person and overbearing person, I am sure that most of us would choose the shy person. We do not like to be put upon anybody. And if I had the choice between a man who was willing to burn me at the stake rather than let me go to the devil and a man who was willing to let me go to the devil rather than invade the privacy of my mind and spirit, I am afraid that I would choose the latter.

In fact, I wish that some of the shyness which we Christians have in such abundance could be diverted into some other fields. I wish that some of it could be diverted into the field of advertising, so that people in magazines and on the radio would be a little more shy about entering into my own personal life and about trying to influence the kind of soap I use and the automobile I drive. I wish that politicians were a little more reticent about barging into my mind with propaganda that is misleading and facts that are often false. I wish that this kind of shyness could be diverted into the secular world we live in so that businessmen and politicians and all the rest of the people who run the world's affairs had a little more tendency to think twice before they invaded the privacy of another person's mind and heart.

COMPELLED TO SHARE

Yet, it is true that this shyness disappears when a man finds something so valuable to himself that he is compelled to share it with others. If you have suffered from a long illness and you find a doctor who cures you, your shyness does not prevent you from recommending that doctor to another person who is suffering from the same illness. That is one time you do not hesitate to invade an extremely tender spot in a man's privacy. If for you the gates of knowledge have been opened by the education that has been provided by a certain school, you are not so shy with your own children or even other people's children that you do not recommend the same school that may open the same gates for them.

One man has the good fortune and the

wisdom to collect treasures from the art world of many nations and, at the same time, he is compelled to send that collection on a long trip to every nook and corner of the nation so that other people can share the wonders of it. Vaughan Williams, the English composer that all of us know because he has written not only secular music but sacred music which we often sing in church, has written a book called *The Making of Music* and if there is anyone who has not yet yielded to the charms of music, this book will be more likely to break down any resistence that he may have than anything I know. Somewhere in the book he says, "Music must be offered to all, though it will not be accepted by all."

When we feel deeply about anything that has released in us the life that we long for, our instinctive desire is to share it; that is, to offer it to all. Medicine must be offered to all even though it may not be accepted by all; knowledge must be offered to all, even though all may not accept it; beauty must be offered to everyone, even though everyone will not respond to it.

"COME SEE A MAN"

There is a story in St. John's Gospel about Jesus and a woman that he met while he was resting at Jacob's well. Like many people of our own day, she was a woman with serious inner difficulties, conflicts, tensions, frustration. She had no idea, of course, whom it was she was talking to; she took part quite naively and sincerely in the conversation, realizing gradually that she was talking to no ordinary person, but to a person who could see right through her, the way light can go through an open window. Still she didn't know exactly who it was but, when she went back home, she said to her friends, "Come see a man, who has told me all that I ever did." "Then the whole town went out of the city and came unto him." At times like that the ordinary shyness that makes us shrink from invading the privacy of another simply disappears. Our own exuberance overcomes it the way light overcomes darkness and takes it away. When we have met a person or a thing, like music or painting or higher mathematics, some influence, some power that has set free the springs of life in us, we are compelled to share that with others, and we go to our friends and say to them. Come see a man who has done something for me that I wish he could do for you, too.

Is it that we are too shy, really? Or is it, rather, that our faith is too shallow? Is it that we have too much reverence for the private life of another to suggest that he entertain anything that he does not already welcome in his heart and mind, or is it because nothing much has happened to us, big enough or great enough, significant enough, to make us want to go to other people and say, Come see what I have found?

CULTIVATED BROADMINDEDNESS

Our broadmindedness is rooted in our growing appreciation of the other great religions of the world. There isn't any question about this, I think. Our horizons are immeasurably wider than they were a generation or two ago, and the reasons for it are obvious. We travel about more, we read more, we mingle more freely with people from all parts of the globe. Hinduism is not only a name in a book; we have met Hindus; some young people have even roomed with them in college. We appreciate more than our fathers did what the great religions of the world have contributed to the spiritual life of mankind. We are not so likely as our grandparents were to stand up and say, We have all the Truth there is, and there is no other Truth than what we have. We have lost, thank God, some of the spiritual arrogance that some of our predecessors had; we are not under the illusion that we have a monopoly on the Truth, and that at no other time and in no other place has God ever revealed anything of Himself to anybody but those who are in the Christian tradition. This is a good thing, at least in my judgment and I imagine it is in yours, some people in Christianity, I am sure, who regret it. They are the ones who believe that all who are not Christians will burn in Hell forever.

GROWTH OF APPRECIATION

It is a good thing, this growth in appreciation, for a man, who thinks that his family or his nation is the *only* one, is to be pitied. So, the man who thinks that his religion is the *only* one that has any claim upon the the Truth, that has ever liberated men from the forces that shrink their lives, that sort of person is today, I think, insufferable. The danger is, however, that we go from one extreme to the other, the way a pendulum does. It is a real danger that we go from the enthusiastic freshman who says, My college is the only college in the world, to the other extreme of the disenchanted senior who says, They are all alike, and one college is as good as another. There is a real danger that we will not only grow into the mature point of view of a man who appreciates the best that

gion has produced everywhere in the rld, but that we will also slip into the attie of a man like Toynbee who goes so far to say that the four great religions of the rld are four variations on a single theme. ere is a danger that we will go even furththan that and say that one religion is as od as another, and so cut the ground right from any effort to spread Christianity other people. There is no incentive to give body anything if you are convinced that at he already has is just as good, if not ter, than what you have to give him.

When you get right down to it, and I am ing now to be as honest and objective as an, realizing, of course, that in speaking ut things like these, one cannot be entireobjective, for one cannot discard his affions and loyalties and convictions but, ing to be objective, isn't it true to say t as far as the religions of the world they are *not* all alike, and one is *not* as od as another? For example, the religion t demands the sacrifice of an innocent ld is not as good as a religion that asks sacrifice of a contrite heart. The religion t consigns thousands of men to the ranks "the untouchables" is not as good as a reion that draws all men into one family d claims that all people are the children the living God. A religion that depends on the power of the sword and violence t goes with it is not as good as the reli-n that depends upon that power of love d the influence of good over evil.

WRONG QUESTIONS

One of the troubles with us, I think, one of r difficulties, is that sometimes we ask wrong question. We are likely to ask the estion, Which of the religions of the world the absolutely true one? as though all the ner religions were completely untrue. That not the question, because that does not present the situation as it is. The question s put for us by C. S. Lewis in his new ok, *Surprised by Joy*. He is a very shrewd, ghly intellectual, cultivated, sophisticated n of the world, who has made a long pilimage from the youthful, adolescent ristianity in which he was brought up d which he accepted as a matter of course, d which meant nothing but fear and guilt his inner life, then out into atheistic maialism which was the current religion of s day as a young Oxford student and don, d back again into the fold of the Christian ith. The question as he puts it is this. It not where is there one religion that has the truth over against all the others that have none. The question is, "Where has religion reached its true maturity? Where, if anywhere, have the hints of all Paganism been fulfilled?"

That is the question. Where, if anywhere, is the religion in which all the glimpses, intimations and hints of the Divine Revelation toward which the aspirations of men and women have been moving, where if anywhere is there a religion in which all these have reached their fulfillment and come to a culmination which we can call the Truth?

He also clarifies the issue by the answer that he gives. "There are only two answers." he says, "either in Hinduism or in Christianity." I say that he clarifies the issue because sometimes Christians obscure the issue by implying in the question that there isn't any real choice, and that there is no real alternative to Christianity. In other words, they imply that Christianity has no real competition. C. S. Lewis admits that there are two possible choices, Hinduism and Christianity. "Everything else," he says, "is either a preparation for, or a vulgarization of, one of these." Most of us, including myself, I am frank to say, have neither the time nor the inclination, nor the opportunity to investigate Hinduism in any first-hand way, and are not prepared to stand as a judge, holding these two great religions in either hand, weighing them as in a balance. I certainly cannot do that.

C. S. Lewis is better prepared than most of us; he knows a good deal about the religions of the East, and the thing that he said about Hinduism was something like this. Hinduism falls short at this point: it has never made a real marriage between the philosophy and the spiritual ideals which are high and lofty in its life, and the practices and performance of its cult. On the one hand, he says, you can find a Brahmin, drawn entirely apart from the world, meditating in the forest upon the highest things of heaven and, within a half a mile from him, temple prostitution, cruelty and all other sorts of monstrosities. He then goes on to his discovery of the Gospels which, as a literary critic, he appreciates perhaps more than a great many people do. He read these, he said, as though for the first time and recognized in them the myth that had become fact.

NONE LIKE CHRIST

The culmination, of course, of what he says in defense of Christianity is the thing that I try so feebly to say, and yet feel more and more every year. The culmination of

everything is in Jesus. "No person was like the person depicted in these Gospels," he says. "lit by a light from another world."

Without being arrogant, without being blind to the great contributions that the other religions of the world have made, without separating ourselves, if you will, from sharing in the great things that they have brought to the world, we can say, I believe with all my heart, that Christianity has something that no other religion has. It has a Man who fulfilled all that man was ever meant to be. It has a Man in whom the Love of God was made real and the Will of God made plain. It has a Cross on which the evil of the world was conquered by the mystery of the love of the suffering God. And it has a God who became Man that men might become the sons of God. It has a strange power, not always effective, and certainly we would be overstating the case if we tried to make out that we were perfect examples of it, it has a power, nevertheless, that can and does on occasion, more often than you may expect, change the sons of darkness into the children of light.

Is it, then, a denial of the shyness which we appreciate, or the broadmindedness which we have so carefully cultivated, to say that Christianity must be offered to all, though all will not accept it? Is it too much to expect that people who have come into intimate and real contact with Jesus will not be satisfied until they have said to their friends and their neighbors, and by representatives that they can send throughout the world, to everybody, Come see a Man, unlike any other that ever lived, in whom manhood and the Godhead met together in one sublime act of liberating Love. Come see a Man; you don't have to believe anything about him at the moment; you don't have to promise anything until you see him; you don't have to do anything before you know what he does; but come see him. And see what that Life and Light might do for you.

Compelled Christians

J. R. BROKHOFF, St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Charlotte, N. C.

And the master said to the servant, Go out to the highway and hedges, and compel people to come in, that my house way be filled.' Luke 14:23.

Do you think that people ought to be forced to do what is good for them? The answer appears to be "Yes," because we force our children to go to school until they are age 16. Because parents are neglecting to bring their children and youth for a polio shot, there is a movement on foot to get a law compelling children to receive the serum. If we believe in compelling people to do what is good for them, should we do the some in the religious field? Though the text says, "Compel people to come in," Jesus would not use force to bring people to faith. He once said, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself . . ." The words, "if" and "let", surely cancel the idea of using force. In Revelation we hear Jesus say, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man will open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him and he with me." Jesus stands at the door of our hearts. He will not open the door nor will he knock down the door to come into our lives. With outstretched arms Jesus says, "Come unto me all ye that labor . . . ." This shows us that Christianity is by invitation only. We can accept or reject it. We can take it or leave it.

On the other hand, Christians are compelled people. The words of the text are true: "Compel people to come in." This compulsion is not an external, physical force, but an inner, spiritual compulsion. C. S. Lewis, famous English author of "Screwtape Letters," tells in a recent autobiography how, over long years, he searched for truth. When he finally came to the truth in Christ, he says he felt compelled to be a Christian. A Christian forced from without to embrace the faith is only a name on a church roll. but a Christian compelled from within is a true Christian.

While this may be true, we still are faced with a very serious problem. Because we know that the Christian faith is the faith that saves the soul for eternity, we are so concerned about our loved ones and friends not being Christians that we are tempted to use external force. If we are not to use it, how can we get non-Christians to be impelled from within? You are saying: "There is nothing I would rather see than my husband going to church with me" or "I would be delighted if my son would go to Sunday School and become a member of the Youth Choir. But, how can I get him to want to be active?"

INNER FORCE

What would make a person want to be an active Christian? What is this inner compel-

force? For one thing, a true Christian compelled Christian because he senses a d for God. Every man, whether he realiz- t or not, needs God for peace of mind. n is naturally religious. He was made God for God. God is man's natural itat. He cannot live in the fullest aning of the term without God. When Tampa a few weeks ago on a preach- mission, a friend took me to one Florida's natural wonders, Weekiwachee ring. This fresh-water spring is about 75 t deep. The water is so clear that tourists seated under water behind a glass ough which young women—mermaids— on an under-water show. You can see m drink a bottle of pop and eat a banana. ey seem to be able to live under the water though they were fish. However, there ne thing that makes them human. Near m is an air hose and ever so often the ls will take a breath of oxygen from the e. At the climax of the show, the girls ve the hose and dive to the bottom of the e. For some time the spectators wonder w they are able to do without air for the g period of time. As the point of endur- e comes to an end, the girls shoot upward a bullet to get their heads above water. n must have air to live. A fish must have ter to live. A soul must have God to live.

What ails most people is their lack of God. ey need the fresh air of God's essence. art from God, man is nervous, insecure, l frustrated. Without God, life has no aning. There is no good reason for living. a recent cartoon a well-dressed lady was lining on a psychiatrist's couch. She turn- to the doctor and said, "I am intelligent, utiful, and wealthy. What's wrong with ?" The thing most probably wrong was lack of God. She had everything but l. Every man to be at peace with himself l with his world must have God.

A man needs God, too, to quiet his con- ence. Each of us knows he has a consci- e. When something is done that is not le, something inside hurts us, or should rt us. This is the moral faculty with which were endowed. We all feel that some how other we are accountable to God for the d of life we live. Because we do not meas- up, we have a sense of guilt. Who can ieve this sinful feeling? We know we can- t make it right with God. We cannot give gift that could possibly pay for the wrong ne. Only God can forgive, and if He for- es, it must be a totally free gift of grace. there is any one reason why we are com- lled to be Christians, it is this. We need God to forgive us for our sins. While it may be true to tell people that the church needs them and therefore they should join it, it is far more true to say that they need God.

NEED FOR GOD

As life continues and we get older, we realize more and more clearly that we need God for strength to live triumphantly. Life can become too much for us. Burdens become too heavy for us to carry. Sorrows are sometimes too deep, problems too complex. Now and then we see a woman in a hospital hall who is broken-hearted because she just received the news that the operation indicated that there was no hope for a permanent recovery for her husband. Who or what earthly promise can possibly bring peace to her troubled heart? Think of the man who loses his job unexpectedly. He is in debt to the extent that every month's salary is taken up with debt payments. He has a wife and several children. Where will he find a job to pay as much? What can make him face the uncertain future with confidence? Here is a set of parents whose teen-age child ran away from home and has been gone several days. They have not heard a word of his whereabouts. They are frantic. Can anyone other than God bring them hope? In these cases as with many others like them, there is one source of strength and comfort—God. Having Him we can meet life successfully. As life continue, we have the growing conviction that if it were not for God's help, we could not get through the deep waters of affliction.

When this need for God is felt, a person is compelled to be a Christian. He needs God in a most desperate way. In addition, a man is compelled to be a Christian when he knows and accepts the love of Christ.

Love is the most compelling force on earth. People will do things for love that they would not do for anything else. There is an old legend about the contest between the sun and the wind in getting a man to remove his coat. The wind tried its best to rip off the man's coat, but the more the wind blew, the more the man tightened his coat around him. Then the sun came out. Soon the man, because he was hot, took off his coat voluntarily. The wind represents complusion from without; the sun, complusion from within. The sun is like the love of God.

Love ever wins and makes men do wonderful things. It will make a man like Schweitzer give his life to the illiterates of Africa. Once when in despair, Schweitzer

complained, "What a blockhead I was to come to doctor these savages!" A co-worker answered, "Doctor, you may be a blockhead for coming here, but you will be no blockhead in heaven." Men are fools for Christ, because they love Christ. A woman with graduate degrees and exceptional talent, marries and has children. As you see her on hands and knees mopping floors and washing diapers, you wonder what would make her be satisfied to do those humble tasks. Love is the only answer. A wife endures an alcoholic husband year after year. She and the children endure the hardship of not having enough food, because of his habit. Why does she put up with it? Because down deep in her heart, she still loves him and will stick by him. A man has a faithless wife and she takes up with another man. She later realizes her mistake and asks her husband to take her back. He forgives her, forgets about it, and starts life again with her. Why doesn't he divorce her? It is because he loves her as he did on the day they were married.

Each one of us has a basic need for love and to be loved. Jesus alone best answers that fundamental end of human nature. He gives us the love that satisfies our need of fellowship. We all want friends, and we long for companionship. We do not want to be alone. We long for the feel of a friend's warm, strong hand. Jesus is one who is alway by our side. He is a friend and companion. He can be closer than a brother. It is as a hymn says: "He talks with me, and he walks with me, and he tells me I am His own."

NEED OF SECURITY

This love of Jesus satisfies our need of security. Security in love is the only security that is safe for us to have. Love means that we belong to someone. Someone wants us; someone cares for us. The most miserable feeling in the world is to think that not a soul cares whether we live or die. We want to belong. Christ assures us that he will love us until the very end. His love is not fickle like human love. No one can be certain of love tomorrow. A couple may be in love when they marry, but neither one can be sure they will love each other ten years from that time. Our children may love us when they are toddlers, but there is no assurance that they will love us when they are Adolescents. Christ's love on the contrary, is a love to the very end of life. That is why Paul insists that nothing can separate us from the love of God. He asked whether death or life, things present or things to come, whether powers or principalities can destroy that love of God. The answer is emphatic. "I am persuaded that nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus."

It is good to be loved, but each of us must love in return. To receive love without returning it turns life sour. Love to be fresh and living must be productive. You say, "I believe that Jesus loves me dearly, but how can I love him?" The answer was given by John in his first epistle: "We love him because he first loved us." That is normal, is it not? A child does not know anything about love or how to love. It would be more natural for the child to hate. When the child is held close to its mother's soft breast, is coddled and hugged and kissed, the child begins to feel loved. The child learns to love its mother by copying the love of its mother. Is it not the same in adult life? If tomorrow morning you enter your office or shop with a smile, your fellow-workers will smile back at you. If you have a kind and soft word for your associates, you receive the same kind of words in return. Jesus taught this law: "Give and it shall be given unto you."

The love that Christ showers upon us becomes irresistible. Once Jesus promised, "If I be lifted up, I will draw all man unto me." As a moth at night flies to a bright light, as an iron filing goes toward a magnet, so the Christian is compelled to go to Christ. St. Paul was a compelled Christian in this sense, for he once exclaimed, "The love of Christ compelleth me." To get men to come to Christ, we need to acquaint them with the wonderful love of God in Christ. Knowing and receiving that love will compel them to become Christ's servants.

POSSESSION OF SPIRIT

Compel a man to be a Christian? No, a Christian is one who has been compelled by something inside himself. In addition to his sense of need for God and his knowledge of the love of Christ, a Christian is compelled by the possession of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is none other than God in the human heart. He is a divine dynamic. He is a power not outside man forcing him but an inward force that motivates him to be and do the right thing. Jesus told his Disciples they would receive power when the Holy Spirit came upon them. And it did. Just think of the experience at Pentecost.

The Holy Spirit in a man compels him to be a Christian. The Holy Spirit calls a man to believe that Jesus is the Christ. A Christian then is not one by choice but by

mpulsion. When the Spirit of God is re-ved in the heart, something drives him the feet of Jesus. He cries, "Abba, Fath-"

This Spirit brings the believer into the urch. There is no solitary or individual ristian. Christianity always has been a lowship of believers. This is due to the rk of the Spirit. The church then is the eation of God. We are held together as urchmen by God's good spirit. That is why come together, work together, and co-erate with each other. Let the Spirit go t of the church's members and at once the embers scatter, lose interest, and abandon e cause of Christ. Those who stay will ght among themselves. There will be hisms and dissension. God help any church nen the Spirit departs from its members.

SPIRITLESS CHRISTIANS

This points to the church's most serious oblem. The churches have too many spirit-ss Christians. Far more members stay ay from church than attend regularly. nty percent of the members do not come r forgiveness through the Lord's Supper ar after year. Only a minority bother to ke an active part in the work of the church. hat of the rest? They lack the spirit of od. A man's interest, activity, and participation in the church is the test of having or not having the Holy Spirit.

How can the Spirit be received? Jesus told the Disciples to go to Jerusalem and wait and pray for the Spirit. They did, and one day it came. We too need to want the Spirit and to pray for him to come. Waiting calls for more personal meditation, more real prayer, more worship, and more Bible study. As we hear the Word of God and receive the sacraments, we shall be blessed with the Spirit of God. The crying need in the church today is for another Pentecost. Our deepest need is for the Spirit that will compel us to be and live like Christians.

Compelled Christians are in turn compel ling Christians. They cannot be content to keep their faith to themselves. The banquet table of the King is to be filled. They hear the Master say to them as servants: "Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled." They will not compel by use of physical force, but by radiant personalities, by urging, insisting, and persuading until non-Christians feel compelled from within to be Christians. The task will not be completed until the King's house is filled. That will not be until every knee bows and every tongue confesses that Jesus is the Christ.

ow Praying for Another Person Helps

CHARLES L. ALLEN, Grace Methodist Church, Atlanta, Georgia

During the Last Supper, Jesus turned and iid, "Simon, Simon . . . I have prayed for ee" (Luke 22:31). And again and again e have followed our Lord's example. One ny I was visiting a dear mother upon whom e years were resting heavily. Not only was e ald and feeble, also her body for sever-years had been burdened with great pain. She turned to me and asked, "Why do you ppose God is keeping me here?" I didn't ow and so I made no reply. Then she be-n telling me about her son. He had miss-l the way and was living a life that was rong. As she told me about him, I thought the words of the poem, "I know whose ve would follow me still—mother o' mine." n spite of her disappointment in him and e fact that he had repeatedly broken her art, she still held on to him. Finally she nswered her own question: "God is keeping e here to pray for my son."

Many times we feel so helpless—that lov-l one is beyond our reach, someone is des-ratly sick, some situation seems hopeless -but we can always pray. Not only is pray-r for others our privilege, it is our solemn duty. The prophet Samuel said, "God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you" (I Samuel 12:23). The Christian prays for loved ones. Also, the Christian prays for those who are hard to love. Jesus commands, "Pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" (Matt. 5:44).

THE PERSON WHO PRAYS

Praying for another person helps in so many ways. It helps the person who prays. A man spoke to me the other day about another man who had done him a great wrong. Rather defiantly he said, "Don't preach to me about forgiveness. I can't forgive him and even if I could, I wouldn't." I said, "I only ask you to do one thing. Call that man's name in your prayers until something happens. If you want him punished, ask God to do it." I quoted to him the Scripture. "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (Romans 12:19).

When we talk to God about "that other person," eventually the hot fires of hate in our soul will be put out and we will begin

to look at that person in the spirit of Him who said, "Father, forgive them." When we pray about some loved one who needs help, we develop a spirit of hope and optimism that is a sustaining strength in our own lives. When your child is sick, you feel a great sense of relief when the doctor comes because you know he can do something. And when you lift someone who needs help into the hands of God, you feel peace in your own heart. Praying for someone else helps you.

THE PERSON PRAYED FOR

When Jesus said. "Simon, I have prayed for thee," that brought great encouragement to Simon. When the great Martin Luther felt particularly strong and happy, he would exclaim. "I feel as if I were being prayed for." When a person is under criticism by someone else, it pushes him down further. But when one knows there is someone praying for him, that very knowledge is a source of sustaining strength.

Once during a difficult time in England's history, Cromwell wrote his admirals at sea: "You have a plentiful stock of prayers going up for you daily, which is to us and I trust will be to you, a matter of great encouragement." I know of people who are praying for me and for each one I am deeply grateful.

Recently some people in another church were telling me some of the faults of their pastor. I told them of how Saint Paul asked his churches to pray for him. In fact, he asked for prayers in every letter he wrote, except to the back-slidden church of Galatia. I could name preachers whose effectiveness has been measurably increased when they learned of people in their churches regularly praying for them. It helps anyone to know somebody is praying for him or her.

PRAYER AND ACTION

When I pray for another person, it inspires me to do what I can to help that person. And quite often the effort of the person praying is enough to answer the prayer. For example, suppose I pray for someone who is sick. It may be that a contributing factor in that sickness is that the sick person is lonely, discouraged and has lost the will to live. As a result of my praying, I am moved to acts of thoughtfulness and kindness which may change my friend's mental attitude, and in that attitude may be the turning point between illness and health.

If I pray for someone who is in financial need, I am inspired to share my own resources with that one. If I pray about the soul of a person, I will be moved to invite them to my church with me. If I pray about my community's welfare, I will give more time in community service.

BRINGS GOD'S POWER

When I pray for another person, I bring to bear the power of God upon that person's life and situation. The Bible says: "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him . . . and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him . . . pray one for another" (James 5:14-6).

Notice especially that phrase, "the prayer of faith." We know that faith is the very foundation of prayer, but here we see that it is not always necessary for the person prayed for to have faith. God can answer the prayer because of the faith of the person praying. I may pray for someone who has no faith, but if I pray a prayer of faith, God can answer it.

On the Cross Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them" (Luke 23:24). Certainly Jesus would not have prayed an impossible prayer. He knew those who crucified Him were not repentant and had no faith, but yet God could forgive them on the basis of the prayer that was prayed for them.

UNANSWERED PRAYERS

Have you prayed for someone and yet the answer has not come? Every sincere prayer should include the words of Christ, "Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done" and it may be that the answer you asked for is not according to God's will.

Or it may be that for some reason God has delayed the answer to your prayer. Let us remember the words of the Psalmist, "Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass . . . Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for him" (Psalm 37:4-7).

But it may be that you have not prayed in the right way. I have given much study to the method of prayer and I am convinced that some get answers more completely than others simply because they know better how to pray. Let me put down for you my own method of praying for another person.

THE FIVE STEPS

First, pray definitely for that one person. Get that person clearly in your mind so that

you can see him or her vividly. Decide as definitely as you can the need of that person, considering the circumstances of his or her life.

Second, holding that particular person in mind, think of God. It helps me to think of some particular scene in the life of Christ that may apply to this situation. For example, if the person has physical needs, think of Christ feeding the five thousand; if the person is living wrong, think of Him saying to that fallen one, "Go and sin no more"; if the person is sick, think of the woman who touched the hem of His garment. Now, you are thinking of God and the particular person together.

Third, think of your prayer as lifting that person into the presence of God. You are not trying to tell God something He does not know. Neither are you trying to persuade God to do something He doesn't want to do. Realize, as Augustine said, "Without God, we cannot; without us, God will not." Think of yourself as supplying the human co-operation that is necessary to bring the person and God together.

Fourth, tell God what is on your heart. Remember, however, to pray positively. Don't concentrate on the person's weakness, sickness, or wrong. Rather, concentrate on the person's strengths and picture in your mind the answer you want and picture that person receiving that answer. Thus, you pray hopefully.

Fifth, keep praying until God's answer comes.

The Core of Christianity

RALPH W. SOCKMAN, Christ Church, New York, New York

When we hear the word "Christianity" of what do we think? Do we think of Christianity as one of the world's great religions alongside Hinduism and Islam? Do we think of a vast organized movement numbering some 600,000,000 members, embodied in cathedrals and colleges and monasteries? Or does the word Christianity suggest to us a system of creeds and liturgies and moral codes? Well, our thoughts might go off in any or all of these directions, for Christianity embraces a mighty complex of material and spiritual elements.

But in all this vast complexity of Christianity, what is the vital core? Where would we start in defining the primary duties of being a Christian? The founder of Christianity, Jesus himself, was faced with this question. And it is not surprising that he was, for Jesus grew up in the Hebrew faith. In his day the Jewish law contained some 613 commandments, 365 negative and 248 positive. The devout Jew, confronted by such a welter of laws, was driven almost to distraction. There was need for simplification.

Jewish teachers before Jesus recognized this need. For instance, Hillel, a famous teacher, gathered all the commandments together in this summary: "Do not unto thy neighbor what is hateful unto thee; that is the whole Law. All the rest is commentary."

It is not surprising, therefore, that Jesus should be asked what he considered the essential duty among all the religious laws. The occasion of the asking differs in the gospel accounts, but Matthew, Mark and Luke all record Jesus' answer in substantially the same form. According to Matthew, a lawyer asked, "Teacher, what is the great commandment in the law? And Jesus said to him: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it. 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" Then Jesus added: "On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets."

The first commandment which Jesus quoted is from the sixteenth chapter of Deuteronomy and the second is from the nineteenth chapter of Leviticus. Jesus combined the two and called them the core of Christian duty. Why did Jesus declare that on these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets?

MOTIVE OF LIFE

And our first answer is that love is the basic *motive* of life. There is an ancient legend of a knight walking through the streets of Jerusalem and meeting an old woman, who was carrying a pail of water and a torch. The knight asked her what she was going to do. She answered that the water was to put out the fires of hell so that people would not try to be good in order to escape punishment in Hades. And with the torch she was going to burn up heaven so that men would not keep on trying to be good for the sake of heavenly reward. Quaint old legend, isn't it? But its point is in line with the purposes of Christ.

Jesus did not talk much about hell. He said enough to reveal his belief in God's justice.

He spoke of the outer darkness reserved for those who did not choose the light. But Jesus did not stress the motive of fear. Fear may restrain persons from doing some bad things but it does not lure them toward new and good things. And the late Reverend "Dick" Shepherd, beloved preacher of London, was right when he said that being a Christian does not consist in refraining from doing things which no gentleman would think of doing anyway, but to be a Christian is to do good things which a mere gentleman might not think to do. Fear is too negative and repressive to be a proper motive for Christian living. Thus the old woman in the legend with her pail to put out the fires of hell, though of course a caricature, had a point. And with her torch to burn up heaven, she also sets us thinking in a needed direction.

Jesus did not try to secure followers by stressing earthly or heavenly rewards. To be sure, he did make it clear that God is a Father who keeps faith with his children. He said that our heavenly Father is ever more eager than any earthly parent to give good things to his children. He implied that God will not give the stone of extinction to his children when they cry for the bread of eternal life. And at the end of his earthly career, he said to his disciples, "I go to prepare a place for you that where I am you may be also."

TEST OF MOTIVE

Yet while Jesus gave all this underlying assurance of heaven, he did not keep appealing to his hearers to be good for the sake of heavenly reward. In fact, he sought to play down that motive. He stressed the principle that we are to lose sight of ourselves in helping and saving others. That seems to me the implication of his interview with the rich young man who came asking how he might inherit eternal life. The young fellow had kept the commandments from his youth. But Jesus said, "One thing you lack. Go and sell what you have and give to the poor, then come and follow me." As I see it, Jesus was testing the young man's motive. Was he being good for the sake of eternal reward or was he really interested in his fellowmen?

When a person becomes a Christian, he does take out a life-insurance policy. But it is not a policy primarily designed to insure one's own safety and blessings in heaven but to protect and help those we love here on earth. The basic motive of Christian living is not to insure ourselves against the fires of hell or to secure for ourselves the blessings of heaven. The primary motive is love—love for God and love for neighbor.

Does this motive seem to run counter to human nature? We commonly hear the old adages, self-preservation is nature' first law. But when we see the true self in the light of Christ, we see that self-preservation is not achieved by selfishness and self-seeking. The self is made for love and the self can be fulfilled only through love.

Normally we are born into an atmosphere of love and we feel it before we can define it. A recent ad in the press caught my attention and pulled at my heartstrings. It was the picture of a family at the Thanksgiving dinner table. The young father was carving the turkey. The young mother sat at the other end of the table. Between them were the two sets of grandparents, a little girl of about seven, and a little boy of perhaps five. And then at the mother's elbow in a high chair sat a baby of about a year. The caption of the ad was the word, "Togetherness." The words under the picture ran like this: "She's too little to know about Pilgrim Fathers and Indians. . . . But there's something pretty exciting going on that she does know about. She knows that there's a special place for her at that big beautiful table, that the fun and the talk and the belonging-together warmth. . . . even some of the turkey and cranberries . . . are for her too. She knows that what is going on makes her a part of a whole big wonderful family. She may not know the word — but she's beginning to get the idea: Togetherness."

Yes, this sense of togetherness is the natural healthful air in which life unfolds. It is hard to define, isn't it? It is more than the mere yearning of passion. It is more than a mere affinity for what is like ourselves. Love is an attraction often too deep for conscious analysis, whereby the lover and the beloved tend to perfect each other. Love is the outreach of the self toward completion. And to fulfill our true selfhood, our love reaches up toward God and out toward our neighbor. That is one reason why the great and first commandment is, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind," and the second commandment is like it, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

METHOD OF LIFE

Not only is love the basic motive of life but let us go on to a second reason for calling these two commandments the core of

Christian duty. This second reason is that love is the basic *method* of life.

We achieve the good life by love rather than by law. To be sure, we need laws to guide us and restrain us at many points. We could hardly trust our traffic to be regulated by pure love. It would be folly to replace our traffic lights and traffic police with signs. "Love your neighbor as yourself." When a person gets behind the wheel of a high-powered motor car, he so often seems to lose the politeness which he shows in the parlor. Yes, we need regulations and enforcement officials, but the mere multiplication of them does not make people good.

For one thing, as soon as laws are passed they need interpretation. How do they apply? What do they mean? It was these questions of interpretation which led to the multiplication of the old Jewish laws. For example, take the Fourth Commandment in the Decalogue: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy . . . in it you shall do no work." But immediately men began to ask what is to be considered forbidden work? Is it a violation of law to travel? To heal the sick? They even asked, "Is it lawful to tie a knot on the Sabbath?" To such questions the rabbinical regulations gave such anwers as these: A Sabbath day's journey is 2,000 cubits. A healer may attend a patient on the Sabbath if he is in mortal danger. A person may tie on the Sabbath day any knot which he could untie with one hand. Thus we see how meticulous and detailed law-making can become, not only in the ancient Jewish codes but in modern practice among all peoples. It was such casuistry which Jesus tried to correct when he said, "The Sabbath is made for man and not man for the Sabbath." Useful service to men is the test of laws. That is one place where love comes in to correct law. Another weakness of laws is that they cannot cover all the situations a person meets. Circumstances create exceptions.

However we may multiply laws and add amendments, we cannot make them cover all life situations. That is why Saint Paul said, "The written code kills, but the spirit gives life." We must look to the spirit of the law, and here is another place where love helps to correct law.

WEAKNESS OF LAW

A further weakness of law is that it can deal only with actual deeds and not with inner motives. In our laws against killing, our penal code distinguishes between killing with premeditation, which is murder, and killing without planned intent which is homicide, and killing by criminal negligence. But until the killing has taken place, the law has nothing to say. How about the case of which Dr. Caird tells? A man so hated his neighbor that he lay in wait for him with a gun on the road by which the neighbor usually returned home. It so happened that the neighbor was sick on this particular day and did not go to work. Hence the man was not guilty in the eyes of the law, but certainly he was guilty in the eyes of Christ. Christ said, "You have heard that it was said to the men of old, 'You shall not kill,' and whoever kills shall be liable to judgment. But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment."

Professor John Knox has said that love goes under the laws to reach down to motives, love goes between the laws to cover life situations which the letter of the law does not touch, and love goes beyond the law to devise new methods and achieve things which laws cannot do.

Can we not all tell the difference when a person is doing something just to keep the law and when he is doing it to keep a love? When I was sent to Russia in 1946, I visited many hospitals and I saw the care given by the state to orphaned children and to those whose mothers were sweeping the streets and laying bricks. But giving all credit to the efficiency of the government employees in attendance on those little children, does anyone think that a mere professional worker can be an adequate substitute for a mother's tender love. A physician said to Bishop Herbert Welch a few years ago: "We doctors are learning how to prescribe human love." He meant that loving tender care is a potent factor in healing. Social experts, studying juvenile delinquency, declare that they must have as teachers, judges, policemen and probation officers, persons "who have a feeling for children." It is this "feeling for children," this inner compulsion of love, which goes beyond law — it is this which we need in human relations.

DUTY OR LOVE

When a person does something for us, we can tell whether he is doing it from a sense of duty or whether he has his heart in it as an act of love. When a teacher moves among her pupils, the children know whether she is watching the clock or whether she has her heart in her work. When we put our money in the collection plate at church, the Lord knows whether ours is the joyous motive of love, and remember the Scripture says, "The Lord loves a cheerful giver." Paul puts

it: "If I give away all I have, but have not love, I gain nothing."

Some time ago I saw a couple in the home term court in New York. They had been married about ten years and were having trouble. They were attempting to explain the situation to the Protestant counselor. Both were trying to see how little they could get by with. I could not help but contrast their attitude in the courtroom with what must have been their attitude during their courtship, when both were trying to see how much they could do to please the other. How true it is, that when we are merely keeping a law we try to see how little we can do, but when we are keeping a love, we try to see how much we can do.

Yes, love goes beyond the law. "Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends." "What then is the great commandment in the law?" And Jesus answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets."

How Religious Are You?

R. LOFTON HUDSON, Wornall Road Baptist Church, Kansas City, Missouri

Not long ago a young man came to me with a personal problem. He was a minister, pastor of a church. In the course of the interview it became evident to me that this young man needed to see a psychiatrist. I referred him to a local psychiatrist.

A few days later I was talking to this doctor and he asked me a very interesting question. He said, "How religious is this young preacher?" It was a normal question, for a person's religion is often closely related to his emotional problems and especially to his willingness to take help. I suppose the reason it struck me as odd was the fact that the patient was a preacher.

To my own surprise I began to hem and haw. It must have seemed to me that the question of whether a preacher was deeply religious was an unnecessary one. Aren't we to assume that all religious leaders are religious?

Immediately I began to think of what it means to be religious. What kind of a person is a deeply religious person? What do we mean by being religious? I even found myself asking, "How religious am I?" And I should like to ask the question, "How religious are you?"

Let me make plain that I am thinking of religion as it was taught and practiced by Christ and His disciples — New Testament religion. To try to define religion broadly enough to include everything fror Communism to Mohammedanism would not quite hit the nail on the head.

DEFINITION OF RELIGION

Matthew Arnold said that religion is "morality touched with emotion." But this seems too limited. Carlyle said about the religion of the poet Bobby Burns, that it was at best "an anxious wish," "a great perhaps." He also said that "a man's religion is the chief fact with regard to him." Whitehead said that religion is "what the individual does with his own solitariness." It may be spoken of as a sense of absolute dependence, capacity to wonder, or what not. As Professor Allport has pointed out, religion involves all the feelings and emotion of which the human being is capable — all the way from sex to awe.

But *religion, in the Christian sense, is man's response to God as he has made himself known.* It is what a man hangs his heart on. It is different from any other response. It includes or excludes that which no other realm of human experience includes or excludes.

With this in mind, I should like to take as a text the words of the Apostle Paul as he stood on Mars Hill in the ancient city of Athens. He said, "Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. For as I passed along, and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, 'To an unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this proclaim I to you" (Acts 17: 22-23).

These Athenians in their fearful superstitions had an idol erected to every god known to them. Their religion was one of fright and dread and anxiety. They were very religious, after a fashion. He says to them in substance, "If you are aiming at being religious, god-fearers, why not be religious in a great way, worship the true God."

He, then, made three points. First, your gods are too small. They are smaller than you are. They are idols, no-Gods. You made

them with your own hands. The true God made us. We subsist in Him, but by idols we avoid Him, hold ourselves aloof from Him. Second, this God has revealed himself to us in Jesus Christ, whom he has raised from the dead. Third, he wants us to get a new mind (repent) concerning him. That is for all men and is immediate. God is confronting us with himself, and he has given us all of the evidence we need for a faith response.

In the very heart of this passage is a statement that all of us should ponder. "And he made from one every nation of men to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their habitation, that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel after him and find him" (Acts 17:26-27).

This ought to settle forever the race question and convince all of us that all men are cousins. But the main point of the passage is that no man need to seek God or try to find him. He is closer to us than hands and feet, nearer than breathing. God is our nearest relative. All of this means that we were made by God and for God and live in God, so instead of seeking to find God, we need merely to open our hearts to God. He is seeking us. Therefore religion consists in the realization that we need merely to respond to Him as he makes himslf known to each of us.

Someone has said that man is incurably religious, but not much. Why is this? Is it because God has made so little of himself known? Are we really in doubt, or have we made a personal decision concerning God? We should remember that back of all unbelief is an anger reaction.

Doctor Karl Menninger has said that the first decision a child makes after he is born is whether he will holler or swallow. These are the symbols of all of man's decisions. Will he receive love or be angry? In anger he does not always holler. Sometimes man pouts, or remains aloof, or freezes up, or even builds up elaborate intellectual schemes to explain why he has doubts. But his doubts grow out of his anger.

OUR RESPONSE TO GOD

Let me come right to the point, then, and say that the question of how religious we are depends on how heartily we respond to God.

All of this rests upon the assumption that God has made himself known. John stated it this way: "The World became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth: we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father . . . No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known" (John 1:14, 18). This is called "revelation" and is the central fact of the Christian faith. Other faiths either claim to have a revelation about how man is to save himself, or they reveal a God who is so bad that man cannot open himelf to Him. God is revealed as a God of love, one who accepts us as we are, accepts us unconditionally. Revelation does not mean that God makes his will for us known, but that he makes Himself known.

Life consists, as Martin Buber points out, in meetings. And Karl Jaspers, one of the world's great living philosophers says, "*I am* only through communication with the other."

A little child first plays with his own finger and toes and does not know the difference between himelf and the not-self. Then he comes to realize the difference. There is object-love. He comes later to realize that there are other persons in the world, somewhat like himelf. Some of these thwart him and block him in his desire to get what he wants or thinks he wants.

He responds negatively or positively to these other selves. They have right and privileges as well as himself. But the real crux of the problem comes when the child realizes that he cannot push the world around. He cannot make demands. There is one big overpowering monster in the world who can punish him if he does not cooperate — his father. So he bows down. He conforms. He represses and suppresses his desires.

As this child grows up, he carries with him this desire to get what he wants. He wants to be omnipotent, to be a god. We say that he is selfish. But there is another reaction than fear of the father; there is love. Love says that I will think of your needs and your rights and that I will take responsibility for you. I will respect you as you are. More than that, I feel that we are related to each other, that I am a part of you and you a part of me. We are related.

But there is a part of the world that neither you nor I control. It is the world of things. What are we to think of how these *things* are controlled? Every way that I turn I am confined by this world over which I have no control. If we call this controlling force Mother Nature or Law or Fate we have every reason to be mad, to respond negatively to life. This is anger. Sooner or later we cannot help but be disappointed. We are starved for love. for meaning, for companionship, for acceptance.

In this black night of not-knowing, of loneliness, we exist, and call it life. Our own sins drive us to superstitions, to quell our fears and our sense of guilt. What are we to do? We may turn to money, to lust, to building us a kingdom, to snatching a few pleasures for a few short years. It does not make sense. Even atheistic science sees that these things we seek are substitutes for love, for meeting.

Here God come on the scene and makes himself known. The Old Testament conception of God is so limited that man could not give himself to Him. He was a God of wrath and revenge, of demands that were outside ourselves. He could not be loved because of the inadequate revelation of himself. You cannot love a tyrant, regardless of how much you may submit to him.

WHY CHRIST IS NECESSARY

That is why we say that there is no salvation except in Christ. This is not a dogmatism, it is an empirical fact of experience. The Old Testament was a conscience religion, one of fear and punishment, and shame. In the New Testament, we have the record of the fact that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:19).

This was not an intellectual matter, but a matter of emotions. You can't teach love; you receive it. You can learn about love, but you can not love except as you are loved. Both man and God will love you if you will allow them. But faith is the experience of letting love get through to you. This is salvation. This is religion. This is life, the abundant life.

Being religious, then, is not a matter of going to church and professing your faith in Jesus Christ and being baptised. You might do all of this without feeling anything. And if you do not feel, you are dead. Being religious is not morals or treating your neighbor right. It is a spiritual impossibility to do this without first receiving love. You may go through the form, mimic morality, but that is merely being good for bad reasons, and usually in bad ways. Being religious is not a matter of saying prayers. Prayers may deaden the soul as well as enliven it. You may pray because you feel that you have "the divine right to be taken care of." You may pray because you consider God to be a kind of "cosmic papa" who will spank you if you do not kiss him good-night every night.

You are as religious as you are devoted to God and to His kingdom. You are as religious as you are concerned and serious about the matter of loving Him who first loved you. No love, no religion. No grace, no gratitude. No salvation, no service. No Lord, no life. Religion begins with God and ends in growth. The new birth is the stage or point at which God confronts us with himself and we start all over.

There remains one question concerning our response to God that we ought to face. How can we measure for ourselves or for others the depth of our religion? Certainly not all of us will respond alike, but we somehow can tell response when we see it. You can tell a tree by its fruits.

It was a strong love response that caused Mary of Bethany to anoint the head of the Saviour before he was crucified. It was generous, uncalled for, spontaneous. It was a love reponse that motivated the widow to cast her two mites into the treasury, all that she had. It was a deep love that motivated Peter and John when they had been jailed and beaten and commanded not to speak or teach any more in the name of Jesus. They said, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge; for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard." This was not the compulsion of fear but of love. It is the mainspring of missionary effort through the ages.

It was deep love that made Jesus face the cross, and Stephen bow his head to the crowd that stoned him. "Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends."

RESPONSE TO FELLOW MAN

This leads me to the second mark of a deeply religious man, the depth and breadth of his response to his fellow man. In other words, you can measure a man's religion by the way he meets and treats his fellow human beings.

Forty or fifty years ago the name of Dr. Wilfred Grenfell held something of the place that the name Dr. Albert Schweitzer holds today. Of course, he was not as famous as a scholar, but he was giving his life to human need as few men on earth.

As a young doctor in England, he caught a vision of service to humanity and decided that he would try in every way possible to make his life count in humanities struggle for health.

With determination to serve, regardless of the sacrifice and the personal suffering involved, he went to Labrador's rock-bound

coast. The name of Wilfred Grenfell has become synonymous with courage in rendering help to mankind in spite of storms and impending death. It has become a synonym for unselfish service.

Day after day Dr. Grenfell was called upon to make trips under condition beyond human endurance. His hands were often frozen, his face bitten by the frost, his body tired to the point of exhaustion, but he kept going in spite of everything. In no other man has the "power to see it thru" been so marvelously exemplified.

His phrase, when asked for one of the reasons for the Divine assistance he always seemed to have, was "after forty years in the Arctic regions I have learned this, that a man's religion must always be measured by what it enables him to do."

Read those lines again, "what it enables him to do!" For millions, religion is a burden. It represents obligations they shun, responsibilities they fear. They are always afraid they are going to be asked to do something about religion. But "real" religion is a set of wings, not a burden. "Real" religion enables a man to master life, in spite of everything.

FOUR TYPES OF RESPONSE

Perhaps I can best describe how man responds to his fellow man by saying that there are four types of response that any of us can see.

First, there is the *conqueror's view.* The formula for this view runs somewhat as follows: "I am strong and able to control, therefore you should serve my end." To the victor belong the spoils. The survival of the fightingest as well as the fittest. Every man is the rival of every other man, according to this view. Competitors not collaborators. This kind of person looks upon other people as things. If they do not serve his ends, he has no use for them. He does not love anyone but himself and he loves himself in a very childish manner.

These people think of getting ahead, climbing the ladder of success, outstripping the Jones, and often they do it. The parable of the rich farmer. called the rich fool, in the gospels is an illustration of this sort of person. Their is the religion of success.

Then there is, in the second place, *the commercial* lover. They will love you if you pay for it. They want payment in compliments, in attention, in waiting on them, in recommending them, in tolerating them without criticism. These people are often mousy, good, sweet, kind, affectionate and considerate, but they think other people ought to do all of the crusading, the sacrificing, the missionary work. Their formula of life is: "If everybody would be as I am there would be no trouble in the world" or "I will love you as long as you give to me." Such people do not love at all. They are shrewd emotional bargain hunters.

Jesus talked of this class when he said, "If ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others?" And he recommended inviting the poor, the lame, the halt, and the blind into your homes rather than the rich or your relatives.

A third type of responding to other people is the *law court or legalistic type.* This is best illustrated by the Pharisees, the Elder Brother in the Prodigal Son story, and by a lot of people you know. They pay their bills, are honest with their fellow man, donate a small amount to the Red Cross and United Fund Drive, and live a life of suspicion, hostility and selfishness. Such people pooh-pooh love and tenderness and condemn all who value them as sentimentalists. They have never felt any love from God and do not expect to. Their formula for responding to people is: "I do my part and expect other people to do the same."

THE CHRISTIAN VIEW

But the *Christian view* grows out of admitted hunger. It stems from despair. A man never becomes a true Christian until he can admit that at the very center of his being he both longs for and does not have the right to demand love. Here we are faced with the fact that God loves the unlovely and receives the sinner. It is this overwhelming experence that is at the heart of the Christian event of conversion. A man is charged not because he sees how wrong he is, but because he is truly loved by God in Christ.

Then he has a new formula for living. It is stated in the First Epistle of John: "We love, because he first loved us" (4:19). The verses that follow read: "If any one says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him, that he who loves God should love his brother also" (4:20-21).

How religious are we? Our religion is as strong as our love for our fellow man. Notice I did not say as strong as our integrity, our sense of justice, or generosity. These are important and are really a part of love, but love is the important thing. How do you feel about any individual you meet? Any!

our hearts, we return his love. Then we move out to love our fellow man in deed The least, the lost, the last! Is there concern, consideration, care? Do you respect them? Do you respect them enough to give them the right to be and do wrong, and still love them? Even if they harm you, do you still give them understanding and respect that you would wish to have if you were in their place?

What does your religion enable you to do toward your fellow man? Serve him or use him?

AWARENESS OF SIN

You can see that such talk leads any one of us squarely into a sense of sin. We begin to see how far short we fall. So I would say that the *measure of the depth of my religion is the measure of my awareness of my sinfulness.*

I know that there are many people who think that religion talks too much about sin. And I grant that there are people who make mountains out of mole hills, and confuse sins with sin. Sin is saying "No" to God when you are wide awake and looking straight into His face. To refuse to look His way and to act as if He has not spoken to you is a kind of self-deception and leads to sin—only God can judge us, therefore—but sin is a negative response to God as he has made himself known.

Man talks about morals and duty and right and wrong in very abstract terms, but God always puts the whole question on a personal basis. Sin is the wrong response to a person—using him, leaving him, hurting him (even killing him). Sin is primarily against God because there is no element of justice in our mistreatment of God (he has not mistreated us first). We ought to love him.

The importance of realizing our own limitation lies in two directions. One, we must find ways of relieving ourselves of guilt feelings over past sins; two, we must develop active, positive consciences that will serve as guideposts pointing us to our goal rather than policeman taking us to goal (jail).

HOW TO GET RID OF GUILT

"Just how am I to get rid of my guilt?" a very sincere person asked me the other day. It was a good question. My reply was that there are only two way known to man. One is self-punishment. This is the way of most of the world. It is even endorsed by most of the religions of the world. Self-ways that we try to atone for our own sins.

But there is another way to get a new mind about our sins and to repent of them. It is strange how this has been misunderstood. Even repentance has been thought by many to be sorrow for sin, self-condemnation, self-whippings. But this is not the view of repentance that the Bible teaches. Man enjoys punishing himself. But repentance leaves him facing his own sinfulness with only one hope, the acceptance of his nature as stubborn and perverse, and his acceptance by Christ as a sinner.

Many people confess their sins of one sort and another to me. Do you know what I tell them? "Oh, you are not so bad; everybody sins?" Not for a moment. When they say, "If this is true that I am punishing my husband or trying to make my child sick, I am mean, very mean," my answer is "You certainly are." Anything further is false. If I say, "But all men are sinner", I am merely trying to excuse them. If I say, "But you have your good points," I am encouraging them to think that their sins are not so bad. They are bad. They are mean.

The Christian way of approaching sin is to realize that God loves us, refuses to prescribe any punishment for us, and sends us forth to do something creative with our lives.

I suggested that the other value to realizing our limitations is to develop active, positive consciences. When we realize that we have been hating, by coldness, by indifference, by callousness, we decide by the grace of God to love.

THE NEW BIRTH

Here, you see, we come to the heart of the Christian experience, or perhaps I should say, to the very foundation of it. It is acceptance and the new birth. The individual becomes dissatisfied with himself. He sees himself as far from what he wants to be, and far from what he ought to be. He stands at the crossroads. He has anxiety. There are real guilt feelings over real sins. What must he do? If he dulls his conscience, he is worse off. If he punishes himself he is nearer to a repetition of his sins. If he tries to cover up his sins by doing good, he becomes a hypocrite. If he develops fanatical views and rigid viewpoints, he is simply trying to strengthen his own human controls—and while he does it he is mean to himself and to everybody around him.

Religion begins with a keen awareness of our own sinfulness in the light of our God's proffered love. We become discontented. Then as God heals us by His presence in

denial, penances, feeling guilty, weeping, and even illnesses are some of the main and in truth. To try to cure ourselves by loving man as best we can is to try to get perfume from an empty vase.

Therefore, I cannot blame any of you for shallow religion, or irreligion. I can only hope that you will let God's love get through to you. Feel it, believe it, trust it, accept it, and soon you will live it.

Growth, An Evidence of God

JOHN W. MEISTER, First Presbyterian Church, Fort Wayne, Indiana

The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed.

Matthew 13:31

Raymond B. Fosdick has written: "When the last glacier retreated northward from what is now Connecticut, it left behind, as mementos of its visit, great boulders of rock strewn lavishly across the state. Several of them, larger than corncribs and many tons in weight, were deposited on my farm, and for fifteen years I have watched one of them fight a losing battle with an ash tree. The tree evidently started in a seed lodged in a tiny pocket in the top of the rock. When I first saw it. it was a sturdy sapling that had made for itself a comfortable crevice for its roots. Today its irresistable growth has torn the massive rock into fragments."

The ability to grow is of the essence of life. A person or thing which possesses the power to grow is "alive." A person or thing which is not growing is not completely alive. even if it is not "dead." This gift of growth is so near the heart of God, that we could almost say that the ability-to-grow in man is God-in-man.

Jesus recognized this truth repeatedly but never more vividly than when he said. "The kingdom of heaven is like a *seed.*" That is to say, the rule of God in the lives of men contains a kind of inner-creative-thrust which will express itself much as the seed of the ash tree grow irresistibly in the crevice of the rock. This is a law of life and like every "law of life" it is a gift from God. It is an evidence of his steadfast love.

HEART OF RELIGION

Not only does the power to grow bring us near the heart of God but, logically enough, it brings us near the center of real religion. What is the highest task of religion, if it is not to set free the power to grow and develop which is within every man? Aristotle said, "The true end of a thing is the highest it can become." This being so, the highest possible function of religion is to enable us to become what we were intended by God to be, to permit *expression* of the total person which now lives only potentially within us. The most that real religion can accomplish, in other words, is to *encourage* the natural development of the seed of life which is God within us. Anything else is artificial and doomed to ultimate failure. But any setting-free of the power-to-grow is destined to contribute meaningfully to God's own purpose.

The ability to grow is God in the act of expressing himself. It is what the philosophers call "the life principle." It is that power which enables a tiny seed to split a rock. It is that mystery which transforms two microscopic cells into a red-skinned, crying baby. It is that inner, irresistible thrust which changes a boy into a man and a girl into a mother. It is that drive which moves towards maturity of mind and soul until we put away childish things and become adult. It is that spark of insight which dances where it will but which releases light and truth and freedom and love and power wherever it dances.

EXCITES THE IMAGINATION

I can think of no gift of God apart from Jesus himself which more completely excites the human imagination. The fact that God's activity in the life of man is like a seed — self-contained, self-expressing, self-impelling —helps to explain everything about our human existence.

It helps to explain what a physical scientist can and cannot do. He cannot, for example, create truth about the universe. He can only watch the way the world works and then describes what he sees. This is scientific truth.

It helps to explain what the physician can and cannot do. He cannot, for example. create health. He can only trust that the body is biased in favor of health and that certain remedial forces are at work. His job is to remove the barriers to these health-producing forces.

It helps to explain our social life. No dictator, no politician, no political or economic party can freeze a civilization or a way of life, for a society is a live and growing thing. As Edmund Burke long ago said, "A state that is without the means of change is with-

out the means of self-preservation." (This is the reason every totalitarianism is finally doomed.

It helps to explain the nature of man and his behavior in his pilgrimage across the stage of this planet. It is foolish to think that we can freeze man and fix him into a mould. When God made man in his own image, he placed the seed of life within human history. Alan Paton, author of *Cry, The Beloved Country,* has written: "Man may move from one bondage to another, but he will nevertheless move. This is human life, and it will move and change at all costs; it will burst its way out, even if it is only bursting its way into something else. And it will burst its way out of that too."

THE TEACHING TASK

This gift of God certainly helps to explain our task as teachers of our Christian inheritance. We often approach our task as teachers, whether in the home or the church, as though we were about to cover a natural-born cannibal with a veneer coating of the niceties of culture and faith. That is to say, we often think of teaching as *imposing* upon a personality certain convictions and characteristics which were not previously present. We sometimes act as though the way to create a Christian is to force upon a child or an adult certain creeds or habits which are not native to that person.

Nothing could be farther from the truth. The only things we can teach that way are the literally unnatural things that ought not to be taught because they cramp and cripple life. They are the things which deny life its natural expression. Perhaps you remember the lyric in Rogers and Hammerstein's *South Pacific*:

> You've got to be taught to hate and fear;
> You've got to be taught from year to year.
> It's got to be drummed in your dear little ear,
> You've got to be carefully taught.
>
> You've got to be taught to be afraid
> Of people whose eyes are oddly made,
> And people whose skin is a different shade.
> You've got to be carefully taught.
>
> You've got to be taught before it's too late,
> Before you are six or seven or eight.
> To hate all the people your relatives hate.
> You've got to be carefully taught.

Our task as builders of Christian personality is precisely the opposite from this attempt to coat a person with something foreign and strange. It is, rather, the effort to set free the life that is within but as yet unexpressed. It is the job of releasing the instinct for growth. It is the work of removing barriers to this inherited drive towards life.

Let me put our task another way. As teachers of the Christian faith and builders of Christian personality, our business is not to cram a set of facts into the heads of little children. Neither is it to surround a person with a hard shell of behaviour habits which derive from what is morally right or wrong. Our business is to nurse into a full and healthy exsitence the life that lies within each one of us. In the parable of the prodigal son, Jesus said that when the prodigal "came to himself" he returned to his father's house. If we can bring to warm and active life this "real self," then God will bring to completion the work that is thus begun.

CHRIST WITHIN

This is the same as saying that our goal is to bring the Christ life alive within people. Every Christian should be able to say with Paul, "Christ lives in me."

What I am trying to say can be made clear by way of personal example. When the gifted Negro tenor Roland Hayes was a small boy he heard an old Negro minister preach a sermon on Christ before Pilate. The preacher contrasted two kinds of power confronting each other. Pilate, irked by the silence of Jesus, cried, "Why don't you answer me? Don't you know I have power?" The old preacher did not use these phrases of mine, but he was pointing out that Pilate's power was acquired, unnatural, and so artificial. The old preacher went on to say. "No matter how angry the crowd got, Jesus never said a mumberlin' word, not a word." He did not have to. He was on the side of what is given in the universe, on the side of nature, on the side of life itself.

Years later at the peak of fame, Roland Hayes stood before a Nazi audience in Berlin's Beethoven Hall. The audience was hostile, ugly, scornful of a Negro daring to sing at the center of Aryan culture. He was greeted with a chorus of Nazi hisses, growing louder and more ominous. For ten minutes Hayes stood at the piano in silence, resentment swelling up in him like an irresistible tide. And then he remembered the sermon of long ago—"He never said a mumberlin

ord, not a word." Hayes shouted back no ords born in anger. He kept his head, for e knew that the ultimate power was on is side, not theirs. He stood there and pray- ll silently, and the quiet dignity of his cour- ge conquered the savage spirits in his audi- nce. In hushed pianissimo he began a song y Schubert. He won, without so much as n mumberlin' word."

This is the most that Christian education —in the Church school or in the home—can produce: a human personality within which the life of Christ is growing.

Jesus said, "I came that you may have life and that you may have it abundantly." So long as we see him as he is—walking the common road of Galilee, hanging from the cross of willing suffering, walking triumphantly the road that leads from the open tomb —we keep alive his life within us. We come to our self. And we return home.

The Social Concerns of a Christian

GENE E. BARTLETT, First Baptist Church, Los Angeles, California

The facts are that since 1900 one-half the orld's peoples have undergone revolution. nd even more amazing is the truth that one- ird the earth's people have changed their rm of government in the ten years since orld War II. Against facts like these, it ould be hard to deny that the twentieth ntury has an inescapable appointment with estions of social justice, and all of us are volved.

While we have not experienced so radical revolution in American life, the fact is that me profound changes are coming with reath-taking rapidity. We cannot easily rget that since 1940, a period of sixteen ears, we have had a continuous military raft. Such a time of military preparedness as never before been known in American istory. Racial relations are undergoing a hange that brings tension as well as hope.

Where do Christians fit into such an hour? seems to me that two very far-reaching estions will need to be faced by any mature hristian living in our day.

WHOSE BUSINESS IS IT?

First, there is the direct question, Is all his really any of our business? The only way meet that is to ask, What is the business f the Christian Church? I am confident hat we should readily receive in answer at ast these replies. It is the business of the hurch to proclaim the Gospel and to save uls.

Let us look at it for a moment by asking ust what it means to save souls. Do social onditions have anything to do with the souls f men, with what happens to them as per- ons? Have you thought that the real test f our social decisions is what happens to hildren? In a sense it brings the whole natter to focus. No social problem remains ust a problem in general. It becomes a ondition which leaves its enduring mark up- n children.

War, for example, is a terrible and terrifying social problem. It has its economic, its political, its international aspects. But when all is said and done, one of the greatest judgments upon war is what it does to children. The Korean conflict had wide repercussions throughout the world. But I should feel myself bound as a Christian to work for a day when war shall be controlled, just by seeing the children walk the streets of Seoul, living by any means they could, including thievery. I shall hate war with every remembering of a day when our jeep turned into a muddy yard of a Korean orphanage, and as though out of nowhere, children appeared to move up close to you, reaching out hands to try to take yours. I shall not forget the reaching hands and the struggle of children to feel some sense of contact and security in a day when war had taken their securities away.

Race relations are a social problem of wide implications. Today they form a political issue, and feelings run high on both sides. But we ought not to forget what social injustice does to children on all sides. Countee Cullen, the Negro poet, tells in one of his verses of a visit to Baltimore when he was a child. But he says the only thing he can remember about Baltimore is a slurring remark which was made on a streetcar by another child.

Or again, slums in a city are a social problem with wide economic and civic implications. They are terrible to see when you drive through them. But do they have anything to do with the souls of men? There are sensitive Christians of towering stature who believed that they do. It was back in 1907 that one Protestant leader wrote his protest against the slums of a city in these terms, "The filthy slum, the dark tenement . . . the dismal future — these weigh down the hearts and lives of vast multitudes in our cities. Many have almost forgotten how to smile . . .

their souls, their ethical souls are all but lost. No hell in the future could be worse to them than the hell they are now in."

Yes, I quite agree that the saving of souls is *the* business of the Church. If there is any condition in which men live which endangers souls, particularly the children, who can escape the responsibility of doing what he can, however small it may be? True, no man is ever saved by a better social condition; he is saved only by the grace of God. But may not our hands and hearts be the means of God's grace in helping a child find a better condition in which to grow?

Or again, you say the business of the Church is to preach the Gospel. But just where do you stop in the preaching of that gospel? Is there some boundary beyond which you are not supposed to go? Changing the standard, shall it be preached to those who are at one economic level or of one race or of one nationality? You see the asking of the question is the answering of it. You cannot set a limit beyond which the gospel is not to go. Can we really escape the sense that social concern is a part of our business if we are to preach the gospel and save souls?

COMMAND TO LOVE

This leaves us a second basic question each of us ought to be asking: What distinctive contributions do we bring as Christians to a day like ours?

One of the reasons it is hard for us to answer this question is because strange things have happened to words we use. Words have such different meanings these days. If, for example, I speak of a welfare state, most of us feel our defenses going up immediately. But isn't it strange that a great word like "welfare" should arouse such feelings? Every state must be concerned about the welfare of its people.

Or the word "peace," which ought to be one of the most beautiful words in the language, raises suspicion in the mind of many people in this tumultuous day. There are some who look upon peace movements as somehow not quite patriotic. There is a terrible loss of great words. Then how shall we say it? What is the distinctive of the Christian?

Over the years in which I have sought to understand more clearly what it means to be a responsible Christian in social matters, there has emerged a deeper understanding. I have come to call it obedience to the command of love.

Suppose someone came to you and said, "I am looking for a million people who will join in a great movement to bring more love into the world. Will you be one of the million?" And you say, "Of course, I will." But suppose your questioner came back and said, "We have not been able to get the million. It looks now as though it will have to be a hundred thousand. Can we count on you?" And you will say, "Yes, count on me." But in time he might come to you again and say, "We are running into real difficulty, and it looks now as though it would be only ten thousand." Then he is back to say it is only a thousand, and later only ten, and each time you say, "Count on me." But suppose he came at last and said, "There is no other. You are the only one." Will you still obey the commandment to love? Only when you can say, "Yes, though not one other will do it, I will seek to love," have you come to the depth of the commitment to which Christ called you as His disciple. That obedience is the distinctive mark of the Christian in his social concern.

REVOLUTIONARY FAITH

What does this mean? It means that because Christ called me to love, I must meet every person as of supreme worth. It means affirming the oneness of the human family everywhere. If God is our Father, then we are all His sons. If we are not all His sons, then He is the Father of none of us. We are all tied together in one family with all the adjustments which that means. It means, moreover, that as far as strength will allow, I shall seek to minister as Christ would minister if He were here.

We have not seen the full revolutionary nature of the penetrating parable of the last judgment. Who were the blessed who were invited to the Kingdom? It is significant what Jesus did not say. He did not examine men for their doctrine. He did not say, Come, for you have belonged to the right church. He did not even ask them for a personal confession of faith. He looked only at the fruits. "I was hungry and ye fed me. I was thirsty and ye gave me to drink. I was in prison and ye visited me. I was sick and ye came unto me. Come, ye blessed of my Father." There are few words in the whole New Testament quite as revolutionary as these. For in the final test of life it is what we have done to other persons which is the mark of our faith, and our confession.

Whether you agree or not, this is the age of the struggle for social justice. We have sought to understand why it is a part of our business. We have turned to the deepest motive, the commandment to love. May it not be said of the Christians of this day what

ras said in the tragic defeats of World War I, "Too little, and too late." Rather, may it e that one day we shall be worthy of the word, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren ye have done it unto me."

Playing Unchosen Roles

ROLLAND W. SCHLOERB, Hyde Park Baptist Church, Chicago, Illinois

A piece of religious art that is often found n Christian homes is a picture of Christ in ethsemane. The picture reminds us of the gony of one who was confronted with a up that he did not want to drink. He pray- d from the depths of his soul that it might e taken from him. But he ended on the note f supreme commitment: *"Nevertheless, not ny will but thine be done."*

This experience of Jesus is the highest xample of something that Dr. and Mrs. larry Overstreet mention in their book, *The Mind Goes Forth.* They have an espe- ially helpful chapter on "Roles Chosen and nchosen." Jesus gave the supreme demon- tration of one who played an unchosen role.

BEYOND CHOICE

In using this picture of playing a role, he words of Shakespeare come to mind:

> All the world's a stage,
> And all the men and women merely players:
> They have their exits and their entrances;
> And one man in his time plays many parts,
> His acts being seven ages.

All we are players on life's stage, but the ignificant thing for our thought now is hat we have to play many roles we do not hoose. The parts we are asked to play are ot parts that we choose for ourselves. This as the case with Jesus. He was given a art that seemed too bitter to see through. nd yet he did not refuse to play his part. n a way that the world will never forget e played an unchosen role.

Many of the roles we must play are not f our own choosing. We are born into some f them. We did not choose the age nor the lace in which we were to play our part. We id not choose our sex, nor did we choose he color of our skin or the texture of our air. By birth we were introduced into roles hat were not ours to choose.

Events that happen may thrust us into oles that we do not choose. Death coming nto a home will change the roles of those who remain. A woman does not choose the ole of widow, nor does a man choose the role of widower. Sometimes we choose a role and it does not turn out to be what we wanted it to be. A person gets married, and he discovers that he must support a companion who is disabled by illness or accident. The person who is a victim of some crippling experience is confronted with the necessity of playing a role he has not chosen. Fate chooses his role for him.

As the Overstreets point out, in any direction we look around the world, we see those who have been thrust by accident, war, famine, flood, illness, or other disaster into painfully exacting roles—there to contrive, as best they can, a way of life and a reason for living; and there to exhibit, also, whatever quality of life is embodied in their personal make-up. The load of sorrow and loneliness and pain that rests upon the world today makes it imperative for us to understand how it is that human beings who enact their "fated" roles with dignity and courage are doing so.

ACCEPTANCE

The first step in playing unchosen roles is the willingness to accept them. We can resist playing our roles. Jesus himself went through that step of praying that this role might not be his to play. But some people never get beyond that point. They go through life complaining about the roles that circumstances have thrust upon them.

The Prince of Denmark did not like the role he was expected to play:

> The time is out of joint:—O cursed spite,
> That ever I was born to set it right.

That is one way of reacting to a situation in which we are called upon to play a role that we do not choose. Being free, we can live our lives in bitter resentment or in chronic complaining over the role that we did not ask for and do not want to play.

But our freedom opens the door to another possibility. Even within the most limited roles there is something we can do. Usually there remain some specific things that can be done even though the things we wanted to do are closed to us. We use an expression about people who step up and

play an unchosen role well. We say that "they make the best of it." This often implies that they accept it in a spirit of stoical resignation. Since there is nothing else they can do, they decide to resign themselves to their fate. However, the phrase means much more than that. It means that they are able to reach some of the good possibilities in the situation. They create good out of what appears to be unrelieved evil.

The quality of a person's character comes out in that action when he accepts a fated role and discovers some creative action he can take in it and with it. Helen Keller in our generation stands out as one who accepted a fated role and brought a creative spirit to what seemed an utterly sterile area of productive living.

CREATIVITY

The world is full of examples of people who are playing unchosen roles in a spirit that is inspiring and heartening. Lewis Dunnington recounts the story of an Iowa girl named Frances. At an early age she toured Nebraska and Iowa with her own chamber music quartet. Suddenly her widowed father became paralyzed. This forced a new role upon her. She had to give up her music and take care of her father, who died two years later.

After his death she took what was left of her savings and went to New York. There she discovered that the city was full of budding violinists and there was no opportunity for her in this field. In facing the ordeal of what to do next, she remembered words of her father: "Never quail before facts. Look at the difficulty and tell yourself what *has* to be done." With her remaining two hundred dollars she entered business college to learn stenography. Although she was graduated near the top of the class. she could find no position. The depression was on, and there were too many secretaries.

One Sunday the following advertisemen appeared in a New York classified column

> I can't get a job without experience. I can't get experience without a job. That is why I will work four weeks for you without pay—and then leave you. You have no obligation whatever. And I'm good.

She received more than a thousand replies At the end of three months she had worke for three different employers all of whom paid her full salary. And when she applie for a position with a well known lawyer sh had excellent references. The sequel wa that she eventually obtained a secretaria post in the White House.

Not every one can play an unchosen rol with that kind of creativity, but I canno but marvel when I see the way people ar able to do something positive in acceptin new roles that fate has assigned to them.

UNITY WITH MAN

The Overstreets also indicate that usuall when a person is playing an unchosen rol well, he is reaffirming unity in one way o another with his fellow human beings. I other words, he uses his role to bring hin into closer fellowship with other people. H is not thinking only of himself. He save himself by regarding his new role as a wa of taking part in some human situation tha needs him.

Christ on the cross is not one who i thinking first of himself. He is using thi cross to show how love deals with the sin of men and how death can become a ser vant of life. In him, "the worst thing tha ever happened became the best thing tha ever happened." Whenever we are calle upon to play an unchosen role, we too ca pray: "Father, help me so to play the rol I have been given that your will may b done in me and in others around me."

BOOKS FOR PULPIT PREACHING

Continued from page 2

fifty of the best-known hymns and gospel songs. Written in a congenial and inspiring manner, these stories will be useful for homiletic and worship purposes . . . . Forty-nine hymns are interpreted in *Hymns and the Faith,* a book of considerable stature by one of Britain's leading hymnologists. Emphasis is on content and meaning in this volume which relates hymns to basic Christian doctrines . . . . A different approach characterizes *Christian Hymns* by the editor of *Congregational Praise.* Designed for thos who wish to sing "with the spirit" but "wit understanding also," the book surveys in ou hymns the developing thought of the Churc through the centuries. Writes the author "There has been very little fundamenta change in Christian thought as it finds ex pression in our hymns . . . It is a remarkabl fact that while hymns have often been bor of controversy, the hymns that survive ar those which express the universal faith c Christendom."

Growing a Christian Personality glow with the thought that comes from deep r

ources of the spirit and is alive with a sensiveness to the Christian message for days ke these. Growth is shown as a gradual rocess which comes through the applying Christian principles in every area of life. mong the sermon titles are "Some Emoons Are Dangerous," "Conscience, Asset Liability" and "How to Get Along at ome."

The Growing Edge (see "Worth Quoting" or the meaning of the title) is a volume of ermons which are presented in a worship etting. A prayer-meditation, a paragraph radiant prose or poetry and a concluding rayer give an inspiring frame-pattern to ach sermon. Twenty-four sermons, written quiet and persuasive eloquence, center on mphases such as enemies, prayer, peace nd character . . . . *His Kingdom Is Forever* ntains eight sermonic interpretations of ingdom citizenship. The author, who is astor of the First Presbyterian church of harlotte, expresses the dimensions of the ingdom of God in a thoughtful and original anner.

"Warm thoughts for a cold world, being ables and fantasies about faith for the moern mind." This is the sub-title of *Candles n the Glacier,* a delightfully stimulating colection of forty-four informal and rewarding selections from the author's *Presbyrian Outlook* column. The subjects of these odern parables are as varied as human xperience and as pertinent as water and reath. This is a remarkably fresh presention of the perspectives of the Christian fe.

The Morning Altar is a devotional book ith a scripture and meditation (150-250 ords) for each day of the year. Much of he book is biblical exposition significantly elated to the work and worship of daily living. The author's personable manner and eemingly unexhausted supply of sparkling hought make the book a worthy companion or spiritual living.

The new and enlarged edition of *Our hristian Symbols* is a handsome book which ncludes brief commentaries on the symbols f faith and a generous and excellent collecon of illustrations. Twenty-four of the 100 lustrations are in full color. The value of his book for worship and education is instimable.

The Bedside Treasury of Inspiration is a iscerning and anthology that will most likey be kept on a pastor's desk. Several hunred poems, thoughts, narratives from more han 100 writers are arranged under seveneen main headings ("The Joy of a Peaceful Heart," "The Sun behind the Sunlight," "The Instinct of Prayer," among others) and competently indexed by topics.

An introduction to the basic tenets of ten world religions is found in the skillfully edited *The Widom of Living Religions.* Selections from the sacred writings of each of the religions, Christianity included, are prefaced with a brief account of each religion and its historical development. A topical index makes possible contrast and comparisons. This is probably the best single-volume anthology on this subject.

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CAN MEN OVER FIFITY - - - -

Continued from page 2

to the writing of comedies, tragedies, novels and prose works? Are the best of these written by authors in their late twenties? These two scholars disclosed that 118 superior comedies were written by 37 authors when they were yet in their early thirties, but the 45 authors who wrote 95 superior tragedies were five years older. The 47 authors who wrote 161 superior tragedies were five years older. The 47 authors who wrote 161 superior novels accomplished this high art in their early forties, whereas the 128 who wrote 400 novels of *lesser* merit had lived five years less.

Some of us may feel that prose works will furnish us with better criteria for comparison with sermons. What did Lehman and Heidler find? When they selected 274 superior prose selections — scientific, critical, legal, biographical, autobiographical, philosophical, travel. religious, historical, essay and miscellaneous — they learned that the ages of highest literary merit came in the early forties.

At what ages was the best religious poetry written? "Religious poems were cited so rarely in the 50 histories of literature that it was not possible to find an adequate sample of such poems as were cited five or more times. It was, therefore, necessary to study the composition of religious poetry by some other method. Fortunately, the editor of the *Inter-Church Hymnal* has assembled the best-liked hymns."

The first 325 hymns in this hymnal appear in the order of the frequency with which they were found to be sung by the greatest number of church congregations. These two research scholars attempted to find the chronological ages at which each of the 91 individuals (mostly men) wrote his one best-liked selection. They now tell us the most popular religious poems — words sung

to church tunes — have been written most frequently by individuals of 32-36 years. This hymn study is not directly comparable with the graphs which precede it, since it is based upon popularity with the general public, whereas the other graphs presented thus far are based upon the judgments of 50 literary historians.

Just why do the peaks of the various appended age-curves occur at such different age-levels? Are these differences due to the differing quality of the various kinds of writing, to differing interest and effort on the part of the authors at successive age-groups? Psychologists often speak of the differential decline of human abilities, meaning thereby that some abilities decline earlier than do other abilities. This differential decline can be established for hearing, vision, etc., but how can we know that is true for literary and homiletical output? It is possible, as in the present study for example, to distinguish between the various abilities and the interest that predominate at successive age-levels? Surely, it is not justifiable to speak of the differential decline of ability to produce great literature and sermons unless it can be shown that interest and intensity of effort to produce remain constant or nearly constant at successive age-levels.

A scanning of *The Christian Pulpit* issues of the last 25 years reveals that young preachers' faces appear therein more often in our generation than in depression and former days. Is it a change of policy of the editorial staff to publish more "youthful" sermons, or has youth come into its own, it being recognized that younger preachers write superior sermons? (Will someone ask the editors?)

No yardsticks being available and no facts being strewn about to be garnered, we cannot base this article on fact. However, discussion with ministers lead us to offer these suggestions.

Many ministers who in their younger days wrote sermons good enough for publications are not now "hitting" the publications. Some preachers say they no longer thrill at seeing their names in print. Others excuse themselves, saying larger parishes leave no time for writing.

Let us move in closer to the facts. Ministers over fifty admit they seem to lose their prophetic sensitivities with the years. Others confess they have found an easy homiletic stride which just lets them get by. Some ride by on their sermonic reputations. A few admit that the pew critics have beaten me down." Some have large churches where they become lost in administrative duties. Others confess they have lost their homiletical drive because "no one wants us after fifty." No minister has admitted that his lazy habits have at last caught up with him and left him homiletically dry.

But underneath such admissions these facts appear. Ministers may permit their creativities to dry at the source. Only by sustained effort do our creative abilities continue at high level. In a letter Felix Frankfurter, who has lived out his Biblical span and yet retains his creative drive, wrote: "No less important . . . is the cultivation of the imaginative faculties by reading poetry, seeing great paintings, in the original or in easily available reproduction, and listening to great music. Stock your mind with the deposit of much good reading, and widen and deepen your feeling by experincing vicariously as much as possible the wonderful mysteries of the universe."

We, over fifty, must admit the findings of the scholars that writers are most creative in their early days, but we can not say *"ergo propter hoc* our creativities dry, when we reach the half-century mark." That would be false reasoning as well as contrary to life, for how then do we account for the records of Winston Churchill, Konrad Adenauer, Bernard Baruch, Robert Frost, and Carl Sandburg? And if you answer that these people are only continuing what they learned in younger days, remember that Thomas Costain was 57 when he published his first novel, and that Grandma Moses showed her first picture in her 88th year.

Disciplined, hard-hitting young ministers, bulwarked by native creativity, will write inspiring sermons. But as eyes lose their 20-20 vision and ears hear with decreased sensitivity, a man's homiletical "batting averages" may drop, not because pathological functions deteriorate but because indolence, indifference, and an over-detailed existence have laid hold on him.

Fifty-ites and older can write superior sermons if they will not permit their creativities to wither. We can keep them alive by dogged endurance. Listen to Somerset Maugham: "The creative instinct reaches its height during the twenties and then, sometimes because it was merely a product of adolescence, sometimes because the affairs of life, the necessity of earning a living, leave no time for its exercise. it languishes and dies. But in many people, in more than most of us know, it continues to burden or enchant them. They become writers because of the compulsion within them. But unfor-

nately you may have the creative instinct rongly developed and yet not have the pacity to create anything of interest."

Oldsters, the man with the sickle is a far piece off. Go to your study, lock the door, go to your knees, then rise up and write your best sermon.

Worth Quoting

E. PAUL HOVEY, Congregational-Presbyterian Church, Lewiston, Idaho

There is inherent in the nature of life what I call "the growing edge." We see it in nature; always vitality seems to be nesting deep within the heart of a dying plant. A kind of oak tree comes to mind. You have seen it. The leaves turn yellow and die, but they stay on the tree all winter. The wind, the storm, the sleet, the snow—nothing is able to dislodge these dead leaves from the apparently dead branches. The business of the tree during the long winter is to hold on to these dead leaves. Then there begins to be a stirring deep within the heart of the tree. The expression of its life reverses itself. Its function is no longer that of holding on to the dead leaves. It turns them loose. They fall off. In their places, buds begin to come. What wind, storm, hail, sleet, ice could not do during the long winter, now comes to pass very quietly because of the vitality inherent in the tree. At winter's end people burn the dead grass, so that this growing edge, the vitality inherent in the grass roots, may manifest itself with dignity and with glory.

Howard Thurman *The Growing Edge* (Harper & Brothers)

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An amateur grower of roses says it is not good for a rose to stay in a flowering pot too long. The roots keep on growing, and not being able to push out through the side of the pot, the roots become almost a s o l i d m a s s , curling inward, twisting in among themselves. But then when the rose is taken out and transplanted in the garden, this ingrown habit persists. The rose does not flourish as it would have if it had been set out sooner. The roots have taken their shape and they do not lose it. They still act as if they were in the small flowerpot. Once an ingrown rose, always an ingrown rose.

Long ago St. Augustine coined a beautiful phrase, often quoted: *"Cor incurvatum in se"*—the heart turned in upon itself. The The human heart, like the roots of the rose, can become ingrown. Once that happens, the personality is doomed to be dwarfed for the rest of its existence. Even when set in a wide fertile garden, the *cor incurvatum in se* lives as if it were cramped in a tiny flowerpot; it lives in the big world as if it were a small one, a six-inch universe.

K. J. Foreman, *Candles On the Glacier* (Associated Press)

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A man once demarked that his conscience was as good as new; it had never been used any. Someone else said that he had never developed a conscience because he had considered it a liability; it never kept him from doing anything anyway; all it did was to keep him from enjoying whatever he did.

But these remarks are in error. In the first place, "All God's chillun got" consciences. As Alan Richardson, modern English theologian, has said, "Every human being who is not clearly imbecile has a knowledge of right and wrong." In the second place, only diseased or distorted consciences are a liability, and I doubt that any of us knows just when his conscience does or does not influence him. Then, finally, most people who brag that they do not use their conscience are really whistling to keep up their courage. They are probably suffering from a very keen conscience, and their method of shielding themselves against the anguish and pain of guilt is to deny completely its existence. Whatever conscience is, we cannot deal with it by ignoring it or by trying to "explain it away."

R. Lofton Hudson, *Growing a Chiritstian Personality* (Boardman Press.

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Erich Fromm has pointed out that man has three ways of suppressing evil. These same patterns apply particularly to ways of handling human emotions: suppression of the acting out of an evil impulse, suppression of the awareness of the impulse and a constructive fight against the impulse. In the first place, man is always "sitting on the lid," so to speak, of his emotions and trying to use his will against himself. In the second kind, suppression of awareness of the impulse, an individual deceives himself into thinking that he is better than he really is, because if he admitted the truth he "simply could not stand himself." The third method is the successful and Christian one. The person admits his jealousy, his anger, or hate, and works out a plan of life that will bring these ugly emotions into line with

nristian ideas. He will confess his sins and der his life "before God."

R. Lofton Hudson, *Growing a Christian Personality*

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Readers of the *New Yorker* will recall a tle series of pictures showing an inter- ting event at a small bridge. Approach- g the bridge, plainly marked LOAD LIMIT IGHT TONS, was a truck, also marked on s side, 8 TONS. When the truck was about the middle of the bridge, a bluebird ighted on it. At that point the bridge gave ay and crashed with the truck into the ver, to the great surprise of the bluebird. he bridge was built, as advertised, for eight ns; the truck weighed exactly that. The idge could hold up under its load limit; t not under eight tons and one bluebird.

Of course the incident is historically ubtful. Most bridges could stand up un- r their limit and probably a few blue- rds extra. But any bridge in the world as its breaking point somewhere. There mes a point at which the bluebird would tually be just that much too much. It n't really the bluebird that breaks it down, is the fact that the eight tons are already ere.

Human beings are like that bridge. A man mes home from the office and makes some mark no more vicious or cruel than he ually makes, and is astonished to see his ife burst into tears. Why should she blow p over a trifle? The point is, that trifle as the extra bluebird.

enneth J. Foreman, *Candles On the Glacier*

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Some of you may remember a play called *he Fool* in which the hero is the Christian. e has befriended a girl who is confined to wheel chair. In one scene the girl in the heel chair is on one side of the stage and n the other side, there is the "fool" him- lf along with a group of agitated workers. hey accuse the fool of betraying their in- rests contrary to his profession and pro- station. The leader of the group loses his mper, hits the fool on the chin, and knocks m down. When he falls, the crippled girl, ho has never walked, gets out of her wheel nair, and waks across the stage. She kneels help this man who has helped her and ved her. The leader of the group sees hat has happened and cries: "Look, she alks! Down on your knees! God is in this om." It has been more than a quarter of century since I saw this play in the the- ter. Even now as I relive it, I am caught up in the push of that moment, the sense of sacrament.

Howard Thurman, *The Growing Edge*

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Life has become so complex that all of us must make choices as to which activities we shall engage in, and to what extent we will limit our activities. Always we are faced with the choice of forsaking good things for the best. Sometimes we choose to do things which, while they are not wrong or bad in themselves, demonstrate that we are lacking in discernment.

A. C. Dixon pointed up the problem in these words: "When we rely on organization, we get what organization can do; when we rely upon education, we get what education can do; when we rely upon eloquence, we get what eloquence can do . . . but when we rely upon prayer, we get what God can do."

No Christian should overlook organization, education, hard work, eloquence, or anything else which will assist him in the work of God. But in using other agencies we must be careful not to overlook the most important of all — prayer.

Harold Lindsell, *The Morning Altar* (Fleming R. Revell)

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The cross is not a badge of splendor but of shame. It is not to be worn as an ornament but carried on the back in humility. The cross of Christ is quite different from what we sometimes make it.

There is an old legend about a Crusader king who went out to bring back the cross on which Jesus died. He won that cross in battle and brought it in triumph to Jerusalem. Upon reaching the city the gates were closed and he could not enter. An angel stood by the gates who said: "Thou hast brought the cross back with great pomp and splendour. He that died upon it had shame for His companion and carried it upon His back." The legend goes on to say that the king stripped his rich and royal robes from his back, laid the cross upon his own shoulders and went forward barefooted. And the gates of the city opened of themselves to give him entrance.

Have you stripped yourself of all fashion, fame, and pretense? Have you taken off your shoes and shouldered the cross?

Horald Lindsell, *The Morning Altar*

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"Our church is costing too much," said a chronic complainer to another member of the church. "They are always asking for

money. I am sick and tired of these repeated requests."

The other member replied: "I want to tell you a story right out of my own life. Some years ago a little boy was born in our home and from the time he was born, he cost us money. I had to buy food and clothes and medicine and toys, and, finally, a puppy dog. Then he started to school; he cost more. Then in his senior year in college, he suddenly sickened and died and he has not cost a single cent from that time on — not a single cent."

As long as the church lives and exerts an influence in the world, it will cost money. As long as Christianity lives and has influence in your home and community and helps guide the world, it will cost money. Christianity is not costing much in Russia today. Are we glad to have a *live* religion and the opportunity to support the church we love?

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A Christian is a mind through which God thinks, a voice through which God speaks, a heart through which God loves, and a hand through which God helps.

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It is better to forgive than to condemn. Sid Francis Bacon in one of his essays quoted Solomon to the effect that "he who takes revenge is even with his enemy, but he who passes it over is superior to him." Then Bacon added. "If one easily pardons and remits offenses it shows that his mind is planted above injuries."

Perhaps there are exceptions to this — each of us can think of some. Cosmus, a certain duke of Florence, once observed, "The Bible says that we should forgive our enemies; it does not say we should forgive our friends." It is reported that Cosmus acted in keeping with his observations. When the Galilean hung upon the cross His word of forgiveness included all — soldiers, workers, officials, religionists, enemies, even friends. The hinges of human history might have had a different turning had there been throughout the ages more of that divine quality in human hearts.

One day a friend of Clara Barton, founder of the American Red Cross, reminded her of an especially cruel thing that had been done to her years before. When Miss Barton seemed not to recall it, her friend said, "Don't you remember it?" The reply was, "No, I distinctly remember forgetting that."

V. Carney Hargroves

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It could be written, for most of us: Due to circumstances *Within* our control.

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The common idea that success spoils peo ple by making them vain, egotistic and self complacent is erroneous; on the contrary, i makes them, for the most part, humble, tol erant and kind. Failure makes people bit ter and cruel.—W. Somerset Maugham.

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All parents are amateurs who start ou knowing nothing of this complex and deli cate job. By the time they have acquired a few rudiments, their children have grow up and the job is over. Parenthood is a pro fession by no means conducive to learnin on the job. There is hardly time for suc refinements.

It suddenly becomes a matter of life o death to young Johnny that he be permitte to accompany some friends on a boating trip Shall his parents grant this desire, whic is a matter of almost unbearable importanc to Johnny, or shall they follow the dictate of their adult caution, which tells them tha Johnny, being unable to swim, stands fa too great a chance of drowning?

This is not an easy decision, but it ha to be made — and made at once. I some times marvel, considering the inexperienc of parents and the terrible risks that hing on their every blundering move, that chil dren ever grow up at all.—Joseph N. Welch

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The real issue is the understanding o what the Church is and what participatio in its life involves. The Church is the plac in which the Christian finds himself, ye often without preceiving precisely where h is, how he got there, or what is asked o him in this situation.—Norman F. Lanford

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Jesus did not spend his time guardin the customs; he was sent to his death b the men who did.—Kenneth J. Foreman.

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Most of a person's decisions are no longe individual decisions. Formerly when a per son made a decision he saw the immediat effects of that decision; he was rewarded o punished by that decision. Today, most de cisions are chain decisions. Many people hel make a decision. It is difficult to see wha part of a decision was made by any one in dividual. Increasingly a person does no know whether he has any real part in a decision or not. He escapes responsibilit for decisions. He is haunted by a sense o importance, or insecurity. Decision-makin is based less and less on personal experi

ces and more and more on hearsay, on cond-hand evidence, on the reports of hers, on circumstances and conditions that e remote and impersonal.

Wm. G. Carleton

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Somebody once said that the supreme purse of education was to enable a man to k the right questions. We may expand and apt that wise saying and state that the sential purpose of Chrisian education is to able men to ask fundamental questions. ne of the saddest features of our age is e widespread mentality which asks only ivial questions, the answers of which are terly insignificant either way.

D. R. Davies

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When a man of blameless respectability mmits a crime and is sent to prison, we e far more horrified than when a dozen rdened criminals are convicted.

T. H. L. Parker

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If a danger exists, it is a danger shared by — if a hope exists in the mind of one tion, that hope should be shared by all.

Dwight D. Eisenhower

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When death is imminent we open our arts quickly and wide. How much more ristian love there would be if we didn't ait for death to release our reserves!

Hazel Beck Andre

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Obstacles are those frightful things you e when you take your eyes off the goal.

Hannah More

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It's worth remembering . . . that eventual- we parents will become grandparents . . . d when we do, we just might find our- lves doing and saying the same things he things our parents are doing and say- g) we're now so sure we will avoid at all sts. It happens. Our children are now ob- rving the way we fathers and mothers ndle grandparents. They're likely to as- me it's the correct way. One day our ildren will be "handling" us. I for one ant to begin now to make sure it will be e kind of handing I like.

Mrs. Jonas E. Salk

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I don't expect God to give me a victory I pray for one, because the opposing pitch- might be praying for victory, too. But I pray for strength and courage and fore- ght to set a good example for the boys ho might want to walk in my footsteps. I also pray that I shall not let down my teammates by being careless, lazy, selfish, or inconsiderate. I'm sure that prayer helps me do my job the way I feel it should be done.

Carl Erskine

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Giving is the secret of a healthy life. Not necessarily money, but whatever a man has of encouragement and sympathy and understanding.—John D. Rockefeller, Jr.

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It is no more necessary that a man should remember the different dinners and suppers which have made him healthy than the different books which have made him wise. Let us see the result of good food in a strong body, and the result of great reading in a full and powerful mind.—Sydney Smith.

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If it takes you half an hour to do your lessons and it takes someone else fifteen minutes, take the half hour and do them right.—Mother of Singer Marian Anderson.

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Brotherhood must have a religious basis if it is to have any real significance. Without faith in the fatherhood of God, as Jesus and the prophets preached it, people have a pretty hard time being brotherly. They drift off into hate societies, or more often, into the society of the indifferent.

Edwi nT. Dahlberg

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For us Christians every week ought to be a fire prevention week, a week in which we alertly guard against giving any brother a grievance that will light in his heart the fires of hate, a week in which if a man smites us on the cheek we will turn to him the other also, a week when we turn the heavenly fire hose of love and kindness on every one who hates or despises us.

Rollin H. Walker

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I have no doubt that prejudice against the Jews has been raised, unwittingly, by the teachings of Church and Sunday school. Christian teachers of all grades ought to explain more carefully than they sometimes do that the Jews, with all their prejudice, were the very best people in the world when our Lord came to earth, possessing the purest morality, honoring the family as it was honored by no other nation. We ought to keep it before our children that Jesus himself was a Jew; that all the apostles were Jews; that Christianity was planted in Asia and Europe by Jews.

Washington Gladden

Anyone who has ever worked at a sink must have noticed that if you hold a cup under the faucet and turn the water on hard you can't fill the cup; the water pours out in a young fountain as fast as it comes in. If you let the water come in gently you can fill the cup in no time.

People are a good deal like cups. Thei capacities are limited, and if you try to fil them too fast they stay empty, they resis being filed.—Kenneth J. Foreman.